POLITICAL SATIRE IN THE PLAYS OF HENRY FIELDING

by

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PREFACE

Whereas a great deal of interest is being shown in the political activities of Fielding in later years of his life, his involvement with the party-politics during his dramatic career has not yet been seriously considered. Godden, Cross, Dudden and other biographers of Fielding who have assigned one or two chapters of their books to his plays, have treated them, like his first erratic biographer, Arthur Murphy, only as the apprentice-work of a genius in search of a congenial form of self-expression. Their interpretation of Fielding's plays, more so of their political contents, has been both conventional and superficial. Of the leading American scholars of Fielding, who have contributed in no small measure to the understanding of his plays, only one, Sheridan Baker, has attempted to examine political allusions in them more searchingly, but his study covers only three of the twenty-six plays of Fielding.

This work is devoted exclusively to a study of political satire in Fielding's dramatic works of the pre-Licensing days. The angle from which the subject is approached is that of a Fielding's contemporary; that is to say, the political allusions in the plays have been read in the light of the day-to-day happenings of 1727-1737. The polemical productions of the period - journals, pamphlets, ballads, epigrams and caricatures - have been extensively used with a view to determining their impact on Fielding's thinking. Equally extensive has been the application

to the writings of the notable personalities of the period. Besides the works of Swift, Pope, Gay, Thomson, Mallet, Chesterfield, Bolingbroke and of Fielding's friends like Lady Mary W. Montagu, George Lyttelton, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams and James Ralph, memoirs, diaries, letters and anecdotal collections pertaining to this period have been frequently resorted to. The opinions and findings of historians like Coxe, Lord Macaulay, Trevelyan, Leckey, Basil Williams, Namier, Plumb and Foord have also been taken into account but, being the outcome of the researches of a later date, they are not used as the criteria for judging worth and value of Fielding's observations. As a result of this approach, a number of allusions and innuendoes of some political implications have been discovered and a connection established between Fielding's reaction and that of his contemporaries to the political events, even rumours, of the period.

A major part of this dissertation, of course, deals with Fielding's attacks on Walpole and the counter-balancing attacks on the Opposition. Chapters II, III and V contain an analysis of Fielding's allusions to Walpole, to his administrative methods, to his domestic and foreign policies and to the activities of the 'Patriots'. On the basis of this analysis a viewpoint substantially different from that of other critics has been presented in Chapter VI with regard to Fielding's relations with, and attitude towards, the Ministry and the Opposition. In support of this viewpoint, attention has also been drawn to some external evidences which have not been particularly noticed by Fielding scholars.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the late Professor John E. Butt under whose guidance this work was started, and to Dr. John V. Price, under whom it was completed; to Professors John MacQueen and Kenneth J. Fielding for the favours it is hard to recount; to Professor A.J. Beattie, the ex-Dean of the Faculty of Arts, for his kind permission to use David Hume Tower even at unearthly hours; to Dr. J.H. Plumb of Christ College, Cambridge, for the privilege of seeing Walpole manuscripts. I also gratefully acknowledge my obligations to the Staff of the Edinburgh University Library, National Library of Scotland, British Museum Library, the Bodlean Library, Oxford, the University Library, Cambridge, and the Public Record Office, London.

Finally, I take this opportunity to thank my home University, Muslim University, Aligarh (India), for allowing me to undertake and complete this course of study.

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CHAPTER I

THEATRE AS AN IMAGE OF POLITICS, 1715-42

On August 1, 1724, William Marshall of Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre put on a crown adorned with a pair of horns, mounted a turnip cart and rode through the streets of London. He was celebrating two events simultaneously: the accession of George I to the throne of England and his reputed cuckoldom. For this insolent conduct Marshall was, of course, arrested, but not until his cart had reached the Great Russell Street.

In the annals of the drama of the period this incident represents the only attempt that was ever made to satirize George Louis. There was much in the first Hanoverian monarch (and in his retinue) that invited ridicule; and ridiculed he was most mercilessly - but by the anonymous pamphleteers and ballad-writers, not by the persons associated with the stage who had become (if they were not already so) very staunch supporters of the new dynasty, the day Queen Anne had died. From that day until the very end of George I's twelve-year reign nothing seditious appeared in dramatic form either on the boards of the play-houses or on the shelves of the book-sellers. No disparaging observation was made on the bad taste, bad English, hideous mistresses and arrogant foreign advisers of a king who despised the people and the country he had come to rule over. Throughout this period the English play-wrights, and even the actors, remained loyal and devoted to him.

But this loyalty was shown in a curious way - by the absence of satire rather than by the presence of panegyrics. With the exception of some insignificant "conventional and politic tributes"[1] paid to George I in the prologues and epilogues especially composed at the time of his arrival, no full length play was written in honour of him. Quite a number of plays were certainly produced which were rightly deemed as pro-Hanoverian, but they were pro-Hanoverian only in the sense that they were pro-Whig, pro-1688 Revolution, anti-Jacobite, anti-Catholic and anti-French. The Whig dramatists of the period, even the most ardent of them, never showed any particular inclination to dramatise the accession of so glamourless a personality as George I; nor did they evince much enthusiasm for extolling his virtues and accomplishments - whatever they were. Their writings were devoted almost wholly to the celebration of the triumph of their party, the acceptance of the principles of the Glorious Revolution, the establishment of a constitutional monarchy and the discomfiture of the people who championed a repugnant cause. In other words, they celebrated the beginning of a new era without celebrating and honouring the man who lent his name to that era. This does not mean that they were not given to idolization. They were, on the whole, an idolizing, hero-worshipping lot. But the hero that they worshipped in 1715 was

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1. Loftis, The Politics of Drama, 64.

not George Louis; it was William of Orange of blessed memory, the saviour of the country and its first constitutional protestant monarch.

Plays on the above themes were mostly written in the first six or seven years of George I's reign. The defeat of the Jacobites at Preston Heath in 1715 brought in a rush of dramatic pieces (mostly farces) of which only five seem to have survived - the Earl of Mar Marr'd (1716), attributed wrongly to John Philips, its sequel, The Pretender's Flight, or A Mock Coronation (1716), The Juncto (1715), Charles Johnson's The Cobbler of Preston (1717) and Colley Cibber's The Non-Juror (1717). None of these occasional plays has much of literary or dramatic merit to boast of and the most famous are remembered only for the incidents connected with them, Johnson's for its theft and subsequent transformation into a burlesque by Charles Bullock[1] and Cibber's for its dedication to George I (for which he got a cash reward of £200 and, thirteen years later, the laureateship with its annuity of £100 and a "butt of sack") and for the controversy that it provoked.[2] Two other plays, The Pretender's Flight and The Juncto, have also a point of interest in them as they describe, besides the fate and fortunes of the Pretender and his supporters, "the Humours of the Facetious Henry St. John", Viscount Bolingbroke, as well. Besides these plays, which dealt wholly with the Pretender's invasion and his retreat, allusions to

1. Loftis, Politics of Drama, 69-70.
2. Ibid., 69-72.

this event were introduced into several adaptations made from Shakespeare between 1718-1723. Dennis's The Invader of His Country (1718), Theobald's Richard II (1720), Theophilus Cibber's Henry VI (1720), Duke of Buckingham's Julius Caesar (1722) and Marcus Brutus (1722), Aaron Hill's Henry V (1723), Ambrose Philips' Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, (1723), all these plays emphasized the dangers to a country (mostly England) that arose from an invasion or a rebellion.[1]

The spirit of patriotism that inspired the above plays found fuller expression in Nicholas Rowe's Lady Jane Grey (1715), in Edward Young's Busiris (1719), in Ambrose Philips' The Briton (1722), in William Phillips' Hibernia Freed (1722) and in James Sterling's The Rival Generals (1722). These playwrights, very devout Whigs, have described (in the plays specified) the beauties and the blessings of the British constitution, lavished praises on William III,[2] and expressed their infatuation for that type of 'liberty' which could be found in England alone and nowhere else - certainly not in the wooden-shoed society of catholic France. These plays were well-written and they did achieve a certain amount of success, but despite the similarity of the themes they did not acquire that sanctity which Rowe's still

1. Charles Beckingham's Henry IV of France (1719) and George Sewell's Sir Walter Raleigh (1719) also deal with a threatened or actual invasion.

2. Panegyrics on William III are present even in the plays of a later date, such as in Benjamin Martyn's Timoleon (1730), in Duncombe's Junius Brutus (1734) and in Baillie's The Patriot (1736).

ritualistically performed (particularly on Guy Fawkes' night) play, Tamerlane, had.

The most significant events of George I's reign were, apart from the Rebellion, (i) the Bangorian controversy occasioned by Bishop Hoadly's ultra-Whig, latitudinarian sermon of March 1717 on the Kingdom of Christ, (ii) the South-Sea Bubble of 1720, (iii) the Atterbury plot of 1723 and (iv) the controversial Half-pence of William Wood intended to be introduced in Ireland in 1723. Of these, the last two do not appear to have been even indirectly glanced at by the contemporary dramatists.[1] As regards the Bangorian controversy, it is said that it did invade the theatres[2] but the only two plays that seem to have been written on it were John Philips' The Inquisition (1717) and The Rehearsal. A Farce (1718) by an unknown hand. The Bubble, however, attracted much attention of the playwrights and occasioned a "mushroom [of] productions" of which the most notable were William Chetwood's two pieces called The Stock-Jobbers, or The Humours of Exchange Alley (1720) and South Sea; or, the Biters Bit (1720), Thomas Odell's Chimera (1721) and an anonymous work, The Exchange Alley; or, the Stock-Jobber Turned Gentleman (1720). Satirical allusions to the Bubble and to its farcical consequences are also to be found in Colley Cibber's The Refusal (1721) and D'Urfy's Two Queens of Brentford (1721).

1. Wood's half-pence did not concern the people living east of the Irish Channel and that may be the reason why English playwrights ignored it.

2. George, M.D. English Political Caricature, Vol.I, 73.

Between 1722 and 1727 no play with a political bias was written.

The features that distinguish the political plays of George I's time are:

(i) All the party plays written in this period were one-party plays; that is to say, each one of them favoured the Whigs, the party in power. The case of the beaten party, the Tories, was never pleaded from the stage.[1]

(ii) The playwrights dealt with the events and political theories not with the personalities. With the exception of the exiled Bolingbroke and the Pretender, no contemporary political figure was satirized - or eulogized - on the stage.

(iii) In the last five years (1722-27) political issues and political idealogies and arguments gradually ceased to evoke much response either from the playwrights or from the public.

On the accession of George II and Walpole's emergence as a royal favourite, popular interest in political satire was revived. The man who is given credit for this revival was John Gay, who also set a new pattern for dramatic satire. Tired of sitting on the fence for over a decade, infuriated by the paltry favours shown by the new Court, he wrote his Newgate pastoral which,

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1. Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre of John Rich was stigmatized as a Tory, even a Jacobite, Theatre but it never produced a Tory play. For its protests against being associated with them, see Loftis, 63-68.

mainly because of its "rotating satire on Walpole", was a tremendous success. Gay's Beggar's Opera, staged at John Rich's Theatre in early 1728, produced several results at one and the same time: it made 'Gay rich and Rich gay'; it popularized a new genre of writing; and it destroyed, for the time being, the dominance of the foreign entertainers. But the chief accomplishment of Gay's opera was that it revealed to other playwrights how profitable it could be to have the Court and the Ministers - particularly Walpole - as the targets of satire. Most of the plays produced after Beggar's Opera, including Gay's own Polly (1729) which, though banned, made Gay even richer, were of a political kind. But these plays, written by much less gifted men, were characterised by a lack of ingenuity in their strictures on Walpole and on the Court, and, for that reason, they did not always receive much applause from the public.

After Beggar's Opera and Polly, attacks on Walpole (those on the Court will be mentioned later) appeared in three plays: in The Fate of Villainy (1729) assigned to Thomas Walker who had died in 1723, in The Fall of the Earl of Essex (1731) of James Ralph[1] and in The Fall of Mortimer (1731), an anonymous play.[2] The first play describes the diabolical intrigues of a Chief Minister of Aragon, one called Ramirez. Ralph's play deals with the career of a favourite of another queen (Elizabeth), contains some

1. It is not easy to account for Ralph's play. In 1731 he was believed to be in Walpole's pay (See Whitehead's State Dunces)
2. This play, according to Nicoll (p.371) is attributed to William Hatchett.

criticism of his policies (particularly of his 'peace') and, at the end, shows him hanged and placed unceremoniously in a coffin. Both these plays carried some severe reflections on Walpole and very few observant people would have missed the points of resemblance between him and Ramirez and Essex. The theme of The Fall of Mortimer is exactly the same as that of Ralph's play but here the attacks on Walpole and on his associates, the Queen and the Clergy, are much more obvious, much more pointed and much more personal. Nothing so audacious had ever appeared on the stage in the past and those who considered it a treasonable piece and demanded its suppression as it sullied the character of a "Prime Minister" by "showing ... [him] in a disadvantageous light" were perfectly justified.[1] And equally justified were the Justices of Peace who sent the High Constable to the Haymarket Theatre to arrest Mullart, the actor who did the part of Mortimer.[2]

The visit of the High Constable to the Haymarket on the night of July 21, 1731 appears to have given a fright not only to the actors of that theatre but to all those dramatists who were developing the habit of concentrating more and more on political satire. After the suppression of The Fall of Mortimer (and of Fielding's Grub-Street Opera) nothing particularly offensive, from Walpole's point of view, was either written or produced. Some twenty months later Walpole introduced his Excise scheme against

1. Remarks on An Historical Play called, 'The Fall of Mortimer' (1731) pp.15-16, 24.
2. Scouten, III, i, XIIX and 148.

which a great hullabaloo was raised. It was denounced in pamphlets, caricatures, ballads as well as in numerous dramatic pieces. The Commodity Excis'd (1733), Excise (1733), Rome Excis'd (1733), The Fox Uncas'd, or Robin's Art of Money-Catching (1733), The Sturdy Beggars (1733), The Honest Electors (1733; dedicated to the City of London which refused "to be Frenchified"), The State-Juggler (1733), were some of the plays especially written to disseminate Opposition arguments against Walpole's project.[1] But these were political tracts in dramatic form and not one of them was intended for the stage.[2] However, the commotion against the Excise was widespread and even the non-political dramatists of the period found it rewarding to introduce some stray allusions to it. And whenever they failed to do so, the actors, taking the public sentiments into account, made the deficiency good by inserting impromptu passages into the text of the plays.[3]

In the wake of the Excise crisis came the general elections of 1734, which brought into being plays of a different sort - the plays which dealt with the "humours" of the candidates, of the

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1. Some of these plays were written to celebrate the defeat of the Excise scheme.
2. 'Timothy Smoke's' Commodity Excis'd, or The Women in an Uproar was to be acted privately 'in the secret apartments of vintners and tobaconnists' according to an advertisement.
3. See, for example, the conduct of a comedian of Haymarket Theatre who 'took the liberty to throw out some reflections upon the Prime Minister and the Excise' during the performance of Love Runs All Dangers on 22 March 1731. For this liberty Walpole's son, Lord Robert Walpole, 'corrected the Comedian with his own Hands very severely' (news item in Applebee's Journal of 31 March 1733, reproduced by Scouten on page 280 of the first part of the third volume of London Stage).

mayors and the aldermen, and of the voters and, more particularly, with the corruption and bribery practised by the Courtiers. One of the plays mentioned above, The Honest Electors, though occasioned by the Excise, was actually a compendium of all that was being said against Walpole (it refers, for example, to his cuckoldom, his mistresses, his blockhead of a brother) and, as its full title - The Honest Electors; or, the Courtiers sent back with their Bribes - indicates, it was written to influence the electorate. Another play, The Humourous Election; or, Court and Country (it was staged at Haymarket in July 1734) was also a topical play, but it is not clear which party was the main butt of its satire.[1] There was yet another play whose theme was an actual contested election (of a mayor, who acted as a returning officer); its title was The Downfall of Bribery; or, The Honest Men of Taunton (1733) and it was written, supposedly, by a grocer and freeholder of Taunton, Mark Freeman.[2]

In the following years, Walpole's policies continued to be satirized by the dramatists. The Gin Act of 1736 brought on

1. The author of this play was indebted both to Susanna Centlivre's Gotham Election and to Fielding's Don Quixote. The setting of the play is in Gotham and two of its characters (Mr. and Mrs. Sneak) are taken from Don Quixote.
2. In 1741, another election play, entitled The Humours of a Country Election, was written and it showed the women of a borough (including Mrs. Mayoress) compelling their husbands to choose the court candidates, Sir Christopher Prim and Sir Pimlico Court-all, as their representatives.

the boards of the Haymarket Theatre two pieces, The Deposing and Death of Queen Gin (1736) by "Jack Juniper, a Distiller's Apprentice turn'd Poet", and The Fall of Bob, Alias Gin (1737), by "Timothy Scrub".[1] The first play, a "Comi-Tragical Interlude" of two scenes given with The Beggar's Opera on 2 August 1736, does not appear to be particularly critical of Walpole but it does contain a couplet which was not directed at Queen Gin's favourite alone.[2] The other play, a burlesque tragedy, decidedly contained a good deal of abuse both on Walpole and on 'his' Act and, as its title suggests, it also depicted the 'favourite's' downfall.

Walpole's policy of appeasement of Spain, which had never been appreciated by his countrymen, became the object of furious criticism in the closing years of the fourth decade. This criticism was presented from the stage as well, in the form of virulent attacks on the Spaniards and fervid defence of the English merchants, the so-called victim of Spanish oppression. Among the dramatists, George Lillo was perhaps most vociferous in sounding bellicose notes against Spain (which meant a criticism of Walpole).

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1. For the suggestion that this mock-tragedy may have been written by Eustace Budgell, see Scouten, London Stage, III, ii, p.631. David Baker, however, identifies the author of this play with John Kelly (Biographia Dramatica Vol.III, 216). The title given by Baker - The Fall of Bob, or The Oracle Gin - is slightly different but it is the same play as the one staged at Haymarket.

2. The couplet is:
   When Monarch's fall their Favourites must down,
   And oft by their own Greatness are o'er-thrown.

Almost all of his plays - The London Merchant (1731), The Christian Hero (1735) and The Fatal Curiosity (1736) - contain ample evidence of his abiding hatred of Spain. Vehement denunciation of Spain is also to be found in Hill's Alzira (1736), in Havard's Charles I (1737) and in the anonymous pieces like The Sturdy Beggars (1733), A King and No King (1733) and Lord Blunder's Confessions (1733).[1]

The other remaining political plays of the late thirties were the propaganda plays written by the pensionaries of Frederick, David Mallet and James Thomson, and by one or two other dramatists attached to the Opposition. The most common themes of these plays were (1) the need of rescuing the King from the pernicious influence of his evil-minded counsellors and (2) the services which a patriot prince or a group of patriots could render to a country devastated by wicked administrators. Neither of these was a newly discovered theme. As we have seen earlier, James Ralph had alluded to the hold of Walpole on Caroline in his Fall of Essex and the author of The Fall of Mortimer had not only satirized the 'working partnership' of Walpole and Caroline (Mortimer was described as lording over others and bubbling "the King and the Nation" because of "the Queen's vile Favour") but had also presented a set of 'patriots' who defeated the sinister designs of the Queen and her favourite and delivered the King from their wicked dominance. Majesty Misled; or, The Overthrow of

1. The author of this ballad-opera was probably James Miller who also wrote Vanelia.

Evil Ministers, written in 1734, had also described a similar situation. But it was only in the plays written after the Licensing Act that the above two themes became the sole preoccupation of the Opposition dramatists. Havard's Charles I (1737), Henry Brooke's Gustavus Vasa (1738), Thomson's Agamemnon (1738) and Edward and Eleonara (1739), Mallet's Mustapha (1739) - in all these plays the king was presented as a weak-minded person who allowed himself to be used as a tool by his minister.[1] These plays invariably contained some sort of moral (for George II) as well. For example, Majesty Misled showed the undesirability of reposing too much confidence in one's favourite; Havard's play described the tragic consequences of retaining the ministers of the preceding regime; Agamemnon hinted at the evils of "delegating power to wicked hands";[2] and Mustapha showed the calamity resulting from the alienation of an heir-apparent from his father.

All the above dramatists, including the anonymous author of the Fall of Mortimer, were the proponents of Bolingbroke's political ideas and, therefore, their plays are remarkable not only for the onslaughts on Walpole and on the Queen[3] but also for the popularization of the constructive side of the political programme of the Opposition party. They provide a preview of that ideal society or state which the 'patriots' hoped to establish once they

1. In Gustavus Vasa, however, the King is a merciless tyrant of a foreign extraction.
2. Davies, T. Life of Garrick, II, 32.
3. Caroline died in November, 1737 and the plays written after her death make no sarcastic allusion to her.

came into power. Thus, in The Fall of Mortimer a patriotic band is shown restoring the British constitution, the laws of the country and the liberty of the people which "a wicked, worthless minister" had suppressed. In Edward and Eleonara a patriotic prince is induced to accomplish a similar feat by replacing his father's wicked minister. In Gustavus Vasa another patriot brings peace and prosperity to his country by vanquishing the forces of tyranny and oppression. Similar 'undertakings' were given in scores of 'patriot' plays: in Samuel Madden's Themistocles (1729), in George Jeffrey's Merope (1731), in Tracy's Periander (1731), in Duncombe's Junius Brutus (1734), in Aaron Hill's Zara (1735) and Alzira (1736), in Mallet and Thomson's Masque of Alfred (1739), in John Baillie's The Patriot (1736), in Dodsley's The King and The Miller of Mansfield (1737) and Sir John Cockle at Court (1738) and in Lillo's Elmerick (1740) and his three other plays mentioned earlier.

The account of the involvement of London Stage and its playwrights with politics in 1728-1742 would be incomplete if mention is not made of five other types of the plays: namely, the plays which followed a neutral line, the plays revived to do party service, the plays which appeared only in the advertisements, the plays chiefly concerned with the Court scandals and affairs of the royalty and, finally, the non-political plays made applicable to the contemporary political scene.

Amongst the plays that struck more or less a neutral note were The State Juggler (1733) which not only attacked "Sir Politick Ribband" (Walpole) but also "Chevalier Wou'd-be" (Horatio), "Sarina" (Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough) and "Monsieur San Jean" (Bolingbroke; he is the villain of the piece); The Politics on Both Sides (1735), which amongst its characters had Fanny Wellplot (probably Hervey), Squire Caleb and Gazetteer; Francis Lynch's Independent Patriot (1737) which made fun of the "nominal patriots" without showing any admiration or bias for the ministry; and a "Tragi-Comic, farcical, operatical Puppet-show" called, Politicks in Miniature; or, The Humours of Punch's Resignation, which was printed immediately after Walpole's resignation with The Political Rehearsal and which, like its companion piece, treated Walpole and his successors with equal harshness.

The plays belonging to the second category were four in number: Addison's Cato, Rowe's Tamerlane, Shakespeare's Henry VIII and Ben Jonson's Volpone. In the thirties, they had become very popular with the Opposition for various reasons - the first two for embodying those themes and principles (old Whig principles) with which the Opposition had come to associate itself; Shakespeare's for depicting Wolsey's downfall (for general public it had another attraction - a coronation scene); and Jonson's for describing the failure of the machinations of another wicked man, Volpone, with whom, as with Wolsey, Walpole was frequently identified.[1] On most occasions these four plays were staged at the instance of Prince Frederick.

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1. See Catalogue of Prints and Drawings (B.M.) III, i, 375.

Of the plays advertised for performance but not even sketched out, those having most suggestive titles were the ones mentioned in a playbill thrust into the hands of George II at a masquerade in the Haymarket Opera House on January 16, 1735. This playbill, as reproduced by the Earl of Egmont, read as follows:

> By Permission.
>
> This is to give notice to all gentlemen and ladies and others that at the Opera House in the Haymarket this present evening will be presented The Comical and diverting Humours of Punch, and on Thursday next by the Norfolk Company of Artificial Comedians, at Robin's great Theatrical Booth, in Palace Yard, will be presented a comical diverting Play of Seven Acts, called Court and Country, in which will be revived the Entertaining Scene of The Blundering Brothers, with the Cheats of Rabbi Robin, Prime Minister to King Solomon. The whole concluding with a Grand Masque called The Downfall of Sejanus, or the Statesman's Overthrow, with Axes, Halters, Gibbets, and other decorations proper to the Play.[1]

These plays never saw the light; nor were they supposed to.

Between 1732-1736 about a dozen plays were written which dealt not with the affairs of the political parties but with those of the Royal Family. Of these, four were devoted to satirizing

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1. Egmont, Diaries, Vol.II, 145-46,

the amours of Frederick, particularly the one he had with John Hervey's ex-mistress and Queen's Maid of Honour, Miss Anne Vane. This affair was celebrated in Vanelia; or the Amours of The Great (1732), which also included allusions to Walpole and his mistress, in The Humours of the Court, or Modern Gallantry (1732), in the Promised Marriage (1732) published as an interlude in The Modish Couple, and in Vanella (1736), a tragedy written on the eve of Frederick's marriage with the Princess of Saxe-Gotha in April 1736. On the occasion of the much postponed marriage of Princess Royal with Prince of Orange in March 1734 three plays satirizing the event were produced: The Court Medley, or Marriage by Proxy which was published as The Fortunate Prince, or Marriage At Last, The Wedding and the Court Legacy. The last play contains allusions to Frederick and Vane as well but the most interesting thing about it, from our point of view, is that Princess Royal, mainly because of the deformity of her husband, is named after one of Fielding's characters in Tom Thumb, Princess Huncamunca. Besides these topical pieces there were two other plays dealing with the intrigues and scandals of George II's Court. They were The Intriguing Courtiers (1732) and The Wanton Countess, or Ten Thousand Pounds for Pregnancy (1733). The latter, dedicated to "Sir Timothy Gaudy of Gaudy Hall, N ——— k", was, according to Baker, "written for the propagation of some tale of private scandal in the Court annals of that time"; but what actual scandal

it was thus propagating Baker did not wish to find out.[1] However, the reference to Norfolk would suggest that Walpole also was involved in it.[2]

Much more diverting than the actual political plays of the period were the attempts that were made from time to time to read political satire into those plays which had absolutely nothing to do with it. These attempts, needless to say, were made by the Opposition writers who while pretending to ridicule the extravagant sensitiveness of the ministry to the 'supposed' attacks from the stage, actually tried to cast reflections on it (mainly on Walpole) through certain characters and situations in those harmless plays. The first such attempt was made in The Craftsman of 1 February 1729 in which, referring to the unjust action taken against Gay's Polly, it was suggested that Cibber's own Love in a Riddle (1729), (because of which Polly was supposed to have been banned) should be suppressed as it showed, like The Beggar's Opera, two foolish brothers outwitted by a woman.[3] Five weeks later, on 8 March 1729, Craftsman, announcing its "Project" for the prevention of the exhibition of sedition and scandal on the stage, suggested the formation of a committee of "learned Gentlemen" to examine old and

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1. Baker, IV, 390.
2. Mention must also be made of two suspected Jacobite plays, Walter Aston's Restoration of Charles II (1732) and David Mallet's Eurydice (1731). One was dedicated to Walpole and the other to Queen Caroline.
3. The allusion is to Walpole, Horatio and the Queen of Spain.

modern plays and expurge objectionable passages from them. Colley Cibber was recommended as the most suitable person to act on such a committee for he had recently shown his skill in "Castrations and Softenings" in What D'Ye Call It and Henry IV by altering, in one, a passage that would have disturbed the Anglo-French relations and by removing, from the other, Falstaff's self-complimentary speech out of regard for a "modern Gentleman" (Walpole) given to same kind of weakness. The author of this article (probably Dr. Arbuthnot) found it quite understandable as to why Jonson's Fall of Sejanus and Denham's Sophy (which contained in the character of Hali "a most virulent, allegorical Libel on all prime ministers, past, present and to come") were not staged for years,[1] and he also hoped that "offensive" passages (which he took pains to point out) would be removed from Shakespeare's Henry VIII, Dryden's Spanish Fryar [sic] and Addison's Cato as they were full of invectives on bad ministers.

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1. See the following passage from the Memoirs of the Times (1737):

> I have heard it said, that the Cataline of the latter [Jonson] might easily be altered into an excellent Tragedy. The Sejanus of the same Author, and the Sophy of Sir John Denham might also be revived; they have long been buried in Obscurity, from an Apprehension that no Ministry would bear them. I dare answer, for the present, that they have no Apprehensions of this Nature. I should look on the History of Tiberius, and the Administration of Sejanus, written with Impartiality and Truth, as the greatest Compliment that could be paid to the present Times. It would shew us how false the Insinuations of a certain set of People are, by proving that the latter in all things, except his Abilities, was unlike and opposite to a Minister now living, though his enemies had sometimes compared them, from a presumption that nobody would scrutinize their Characters (p.49).

Taking a cue from the Craftsman, Fog's Journal published a letter of 'John English' on 2 May 1730 seemingly criticising Walpole's opponents for attempting to undermine the good relations between England and France through a play staged at Rich's Theatre. In Perseus and Andromeda they introduced, so the letter goes, "a Civil French Gentleman" who had no business in the play and showed him harrassed by an English mastiff. This incident had the desired effect and the French government retaliated by showing La Famille Burlesque in which they presented an English Minister of State (Horatio) as Harlequin - "as awkward in his Figure as contemptible in his dress" - and his wife as a shabbily dressed "Columbine". Later in the year the same journal published a leading article on the absurd length to which the ministerialists had gone in discovering parallels between their leaders and "knavish, egregious characters" in plays.[1] For example, an imaginary incident was mentioned in which a supporter of the ministry was shown objecting to a farcical piece, The Generous Freemasons on the ground that it presented "two particular persons", his "best friends", as two foolish fellows, Noodle and Doodle - who were called by another character as "Norfolk Dumplins" - showed the elder brother, Noodle, treating his younger brother as a servant, referred to Noodle's fondness for hunting and brought in two characters, one in Spanish habit and the other in French, to cheat them both.[2]

1. In the issue of 3.10.1730; for another reference to this play, see below, p.38.
2. See also 'Bavius'' letter in Fog's Journal of 25.2.1731 for the information that Harlequin Horace was supposed to contain some reflection 'on our friend at Court' (that is Horace Walpole).

After this article Fog's Journal does not appear to have discovered any parallel between the 'egregious' characters of any play and Walpole and his supporters. But the Craftsman did, after a lapse of a few years. On 28 June 1735 it published a letter on Sir John Barnard's Bill in which it was mentioned that the said Bill would have been very hard on "strollers and itinerant actors" like the conquerors, crusaders and, more particularly, the ambassadors whose treaties could be called "political comedies", and "truce" and "armistice" arranged by them, "farce" and "interlude". "Mr. H. Marrall" (Horatio), brother of "Sir Robert Marrall", was described as "one of the greatest political strollers" and "a great theatrical Personage" who had been appearing as a "Jack-Pudding, a Ballad-singer, a Beef-eater, a Secretary, an Ambassador, a Plenipotentiary, and what not?" in order to serve his country. Horatio's vain efforts to keep balance of power on the continent were again glanced at in the issue of 28 May 1737 when the Craftsman alluded to a play in rehearsal (suppressed in time by a "great Personage, nearly related to Him") which showed him "with a Pair of Scales in one Hand, to scandalize his office [of equilibrist], and lugging up his Breeches with the other, to reflect upon his Politeness."

The articles published in the Craftsman on the occasion of the Licensing Act of 1737 included one (in the issue of 25 June 1737) in which it was presumed that the Act extended not only to the "strollers and vagrants" in flesh and blood but also to the

inanimate players, the puppets, since they too could propagate as much "scandal and sedition" as another actor. Punch, in particular, was more liable to do this mischief, for, the writer insinuated, being "always a little, dirty, meddling Fellow", he could easily be "dress'd up in such a Manner as to represent some real Personages of great Note." More important than this issue was the next one, of 2 July 1737, which contained the famous "Index Expurgatorius" (supposedly prepared by Colley Cibber) of suspicious passages in older plays which because of their reflections on Kings, Queens, mistresses and ministers could be applied to modern times. This index included Shakespeare's King John, which presented a King as a "usurper" who had lost whatever affection of the people he originally had; his Richard II, as it showed a misguided king being deposed by the people and made mention of "inky blots and Parchment Bonds" (i.e. Treaties); Dryden's All for Love, which dealt with a ruler's infatuation for a "foreign mistress", an infatuation which had totally "unmanned" him, transformed him into a "woman's Toy" and "cramped [him] within a corner of the World."

The political plays of 1728-42, as we have seen, were quite unlike the ones of the preceding period. The satire in them had entirely a different orientation, a different purpose. They were still one-party plays but the party they were favourable to was not the ruling party. With the exception of a few, very few, plays, each one of them vindicated the cause of the Opposition and

presented it as the cause of the people as well.[1] The earlier themes were still there. The liberties and properties of the people, the provisions of the Glorious Revolution and the fundamental principles of the British Constitution were, as a matter of fact, more frequently and emphatically alluded to than in the past; but they were alluded to in a wistful manner which clearly was a product of a sense of loss and not of achievement. And this sense of loss itself was a product of that hatred which the dramatists of the period had conceived, largely because of their association with the Opposition, against Walpole, the man who had come to dominate the political scene against their wishes. But for him, much of the political fervour, public zeal and patriotism that breathe through their works would have remained dormant. It was Walpole's presence at the head of the administration that made them painfully aware of those national evils which otherwise would have hardly been noticed. In other words, they became aware of those evils only to find an excuse, a justification for their indiscriminate attacks on him, on his

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1. Besides The State-Juggler, Politics on Both Sides, The Independent Patriot and Politicks in Miniature, which attacked Walpole and his adversaries alike, no play written or produced during this period contained strictures on the Opposition. The only exception was Mottley's miserable piece, The Craftsman. Between 1727 and 1737 about half a dozen plays were dedicated to Walpole or to his relations (J.M. Smythe's The Rival Modes, Frowde's Fall of Saguntum, Aston's Restoration of Charles II, were dedicated to Walpole; Johnson's Hurlothrumbo and Worsdale's A Cure for a Scold, to his sons Robert and Edward respectively) but they were not at all pro-ministerial.

policies, on his relatives and on his associates - the King, the Queen, the Lords Spiritual in the Upper House, the place-holders in the Lower House and the hacks outside. Their plays, therefore, were mostly propaganda plays concerned more with the vilification of Walpole and glorification of his opponents than with the bare amusement of the public.

CHAPTER II

WALPOLE IN FIELDING'S PLAYS

When Fielding began his dramatic career in 1728 Sir Robert Walpole had completed eight years in office as the virtual Prime Minister of Great Britain. With the exception of a brief spell of anxiety and incertitude caused by the sudden death of George I and the well-known and well-grounded antipathy of the new monarch against some of his father's ministers, of whom Walpole was one,[1] it had been, for him, a period of success, achievement and elevation. Having laid the foundations of his future eminence on the ruins of the blasted careers and stained reputations of his associates and colleagues during the eventful days of the South Sea Bubble,[2] Walpole had, in the course of the following eight years, consolidated his hold on the government and made himself the most powerful and outstanding political figure of his country. His ascent to this supreme position, by no means an easy one, was accomplished as much through his political acumen, his sound common sense, his tremendous capacity for hard work and his self-confidence as through his adroitness in the art of caballing, intriguing, double-dealing and double-crossing - the qualities which bewildered and sometime antagonized his staunchest supporters and earned for him the not un-merited reputation of being "A Whig out of Place, and a Tory when in."[3] Possessing the facile

1. Hervey, Memoirs, I, 22-3.
2. Ibid., 29; Plumb, Robert Walpole, I, 3; II, 162.
3. The Compleat History of Bob of Lyn, A New Ballad (Lond., n.d.)

and unquestioning conscience of an opportunist, he played the rough game of politics unemotionally and insidiously. Moral scruples, past obligations, the closest ties of friendship and even the long-espoused ideals and idealogies were all forgotten if they clashed with his interests. Throughout his political career he never bothered to be squeamish about the means so long as the end justified them; and the end, in his case, was invariably his own well-being. The continuity of the Protestant Succession, the firm establishment of the Whig principles and the economic growth of the country were no doubt the objects of great concern to him, but they all were superseded by one paramount consideration: the security of his own position and power, a consideration which often made him indulge in questionable tactics and sharp practices. He used, for example, the ever-useful bogey of Jacobitism to frighten the timid Hanoverians and the credulous back-benchers and made them seek protection and security in him. He discovered treasonable tendencies in his rivals and sent the most redoubtable of them into the political wilderness. He detected threats to his leadership in the brilliance of his friends and comrades and found excuses to remove them from the administration. He kept his spies not in the foreign courts (the court of the Pretender excepted) but in that of his own sovereign and did not forget to place his "toad" at the ear of "Eve",[1] though, she being herself a formidable ally of his, he hardly needed one. He,

1. Pope, 'Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot', l.319 (Poems, IV, 118).

moreover, monopolized the Court patronage and managed to put his nominees and stooges in positions of strategic importance, bringing, thus, the King's closet, the two Houses of Parliament and virtually the entire administration under his firm personal control. By the beginning of 1728 he had become not only a great man but 'the great man' of the country and the presence of the ribboned peers and reverend prelates at his levees, the ever-growing magnificence of Houghton, and his own bust placed (at Houghton) along with the busts of the Roman Emperors proclaimed this fact to the whole world.

It had been a period of success and achievement no doubt, but not of unalloyed happiness and undisturbed peace. Robert Walpole had acquired power and eminence but not much of public esteem. The supreme power, the royal favour, the over-flowing coffers, the self-bestowed Garter, and even the best efforts of his well-paid scribblers had failed to put a halo round his name. The very same event (South Sea Bubble) that had placed him at the helm of affairs had also made him the most prominent target for general abuse; and in 1728 (and for years after it), as in 1720, he was "the best hated man" in his country.[1] For one reason or other, and often for no reason at all, he was criticised and condemned by almost every section of the people. Those who had suffered losses in the Bubble cursed him for his well-meant leniency towards

1. Plumb, Walpole, II, 248.

the great public offenders, the Directors of the South Sea Company, and looked askance at his expensive and ostentatious way of life, believing all the time that "Bob the Screen" in protecting others was actually protecting himself.[1] Those who still considered politics and pedigree interlinked and inseparable felt scandalized at the ascendancy of one whose plebian veins contained no drop of blue blood.[2] Those who regarded elegant and dignified deportment an essential concomitant of a place of honour and authority were shocked to find that he did not have sufficient manners even to conceal the want of them.[3] There were some who, professing and preaching lofty political morals, denounced him for his undisguised lust for power, for his favouritism and nepotism, and for his deliberate lowering of the standards of public life in general.[4] Besides, there were some men of wit and humour and learning, too, who resented his reluctance to play the role of a modern Maecenas to their satisfaction and, accordingly, heaped slanders and reproaches on him. And then, comprehending most of these diverse elements, there was the hydra-headed Opposition itself which with its Pulteneys, Bolingbrokes, Shippens, Wyndhams and the pseudonymous tribe of Caleb D'Anvers had rendered Walpole's name a by-word for

1. Ibid., 275; Hervey, Memoirs, I, 186.
2. Plumb, Walpole, I, xii.
3. Chesterfield, Letters and Characters (Lond. 1892), p.1417; Hervey, Memoirs, II, p.599.
4. See Chesterfield's above-mentioned work, Bolingbroke's Spirit of Patriotism, Lyttelton's Persian Letters, and William Pulteney's An Answer to one Part of a Late Infamous Libel.

incompetence, iniquity, improbity and even tyranny.

In all probability it was this universal and persistent antipathy against Walpole which provided an inducement to Fielding to take liberties with him in his dramatic pieces. It seems extremely doubtful that in resolving to do so he was actuated, initially, by any other motive than that of gratifying the political prejudices of his real patrons - the London audiences. Unlike others, it was not any latent personal animus, nor any inordinate and irrepressible public zeal, nor any desire to ingratiate himself with Walpole's adversaries and possible successors, but, simply, the popularity of satire on Walpole that persuaded Fielding to make him the chief butt of his ridicule.[1] The certainty of being rewarded both with plaudits and sorely-needed pence made this undertaking particularly delectable to him and he embarked upon it with great gusto. Connecting his plays with the latest political controversies in which Walpole, at least in the press, was invariably worsted, adopting the popular satirical devices of the writers hostile to Walpole and creating, whenever necessary, his own emblems and allegories, he proceeded to divert the fun-loving town at the cost of the "great man". In the course of nine years, that is, during the period of dramatic productivity that terminated with the passage of the Licensing Act, he wrote twenty-two plays,[2] and in no less than fourteen of them he introduced

1. This point will be discussed at a later stage.
2. The figure does not include the revised versions and the plays like Miss Lucy in Town, The Wedding Day and The Fathers which, though sketched before the Licensing Act, were completed and performed much later.

jibes and sneers upon Walpole - deliberately and copiously in eight, and somewhat casually in the rest. Let us consider these plays separately and see for ourselves how Fielding has rallied the most misunderstood contemporary of his in whose ante-chamber he had had the privilege of cooling his heels many a time.

The play with which Fielding began taking interest in the affairs, both public and private, of Walpole was his third acted one, The Author's Farce,[1] which was staged at the New Theatre in the Haymarket on March 30, 1730.[2] In this play though his pronounced purpose was to run down the frivolous entertainments of the town, Fielding has introduced numerous innuendoes[3] upon Walpole the most significant of which concern his administrative methods and conjugal relations. For exposing the former he employs the time-honoured but still very popular state-stage parallel and attacks Walpole vicariously in the person of his notorious counterpart, Colley Cibber,[4] who appears as Marplay,

1. Loftis, The Politics of Drama in Augustan England (Oxford, 1963), pp.104, 130. Sheridan Baker, 'Political Allusions in Fielding's Author's Farce, Mock Doctor and Tumble-Down Dick', PMLA, LXXVII (1962), pp.221-31.
2. The dates of the first performances of Fielding's plays are taken from The London Stage [Illinois, 1960-] edited by Emmett L. Avery, Arthur H. Scouten and others.
3. Most of these innuendoes have been discovered by Baker and are to be found in the allusions to a 'great man' (1730 ed, p.41), to the patronage enjoyed by Orator Henley and Samuel Johnson (p.8), in Bookweight's comment on the suitability of the illiterate Scarecrow for prime-ministership (p.22) and in the analogies drawn by the Orator (pp.44 and 46) between a 'fiddle' and a 'statesman' (both are 'hollow') and between men and birds (both are liable to be caught and bought - this last is probably an echo of Walpole's well-known pronouncements on the vendibility of men).
4. Loftis, p.104. For an example, see The Craftsman for June 7, 1729, in which Caleb implores, ironically of course, a 'certain

and for ridiculing the other, he does nothing less saucy than bringing Walpole and his wife on the stage itself - as Punch and Joan. Fielding makes the applicability of his strictures on Cibber to Walpole fairly obvious by endowing Marplay with only those traits and attributes which, in the eyes of their contemporaries, the two respective managers of political and theatrical affairs had the reputation of holding in common. In his autocratic nature, which has led him to deprive his partner, Sparkish, of much of his power and run the business almost single-handed,[1] in his disinclination to give any encouragement to those who possess "merit" but no "interest",[2] in his avidity for the people's money,[3] insensitiveness to their "hisses" and indifference to their demands, in his contempt for the "town",[4] and, finally, in his "extraordinary demands" on "the office" for rewarding his puffers, in all these respects Fielding has made Marplay as easily identifiable (if not more so) with Walpole as with Cibber.[5]

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person' (that is, Walpole) not to 'imagine when I talk of Mr. Cibber and his Acting, that I intend Him and his Transactions'. For Cibber's comments on the State-stage parallel and his own predilection for it, see his Apology (Everyman), pp.210, 256, 266.

1. It is possible to see in Sparkish, who actually represents Wilks, Cibber's partner, some faint resemblance of Charles Townshend, Walpole's brother-in-law and Secretary of State, who had lost much of his power and authority over the past few years and was now on the point of being turned out of his place.
2. One of the oft-repeated charges against Walpole to which Fielding refers again in the Grub-Street Opera, The Modern Husband, Pasquin and Historical Register.
3. Yet another much criticised trait of Walpole (see Political Ballads, pp.63-76). Similar weakness is to be found in Fielding's Robin, the bastard of Appolo, the 'Politicians' (of whom Walpole is one), Quidam and Pillage.
4. For Walpole's hatred of London, see Plumb, Walpole I, pp.171,247.
5. Author's Farce (1730), p.18.

Walpole's family troubles, his strained relations with his wife, Catherine Shorter, are described, probably because of their diverting nature, in Luckless' Pleasures of the Town, the second and more popular part of the play. In the scenes between Punch and Joan,[1] which to a great extent anticipate the similarly inspired scenes in The Mock-Doctor and Jonathan Wild the Great,[2] Fielding shows the "strutting-bellied" husband and the quadrille-loving wife living a life which, being disharmonious, corresponded largely with the one the Walpoles were universally believed to be living.

In the revised version of the Author's Farce, given by the Drury Lane Company four years later,[3] Fielding, in view of the political developments of the intervening period, enlarges his satire on Walpole very considerably. With Walpole's famous Excise project and his rather discreditable role in the recent moves for enquiries into the conduct of the Directors of the South Sea Company and Charitable Corporations in his mind,[4] Fielding makes mention of the reluctance of a "great man" to part with power -

1. Ibid., pp.29-31. The device of comparing Walpole with Punch, or with the puppet-master who pulled the strings, seems to have been widely used. See, for example, Politics in Miniature; or, the Humours of Punch's Resignation (taken from the Westminster Journal, 20.3.1742, 30.10.1742 and 6.11.1742) and Pope's line on Sporus - 'And as the Prompter breathes, the Puppet squeaks' (Poems, IV, 118).
2. The Works of Henry Fielding ex. by Browne, II, pp.271-75, 302-303; IV, pp.235-39, 321-22. All the references to this edition will be indicated by Works.
3. On January 15, 1734.
4. Walpole's involvement in these issues is discussed in the third chapter.

alluding, thus, to the illogicality of Walpole's continuance in office after the defeat of his prestige project[1] (this is one of the few allusions not noticed by Baker) - of the frightened "Projectors and Directors", and of "the Supercargo's care" (that is, Walpole's) in screening the misdeeds of the Directors.[2] The most telling hits at Walpole are, however, made in a scene inserted into Luckless' puppet-show in which, creating greater resemblance between Walpole and Punch, Fielding shows the latter as resolving to desert his intractable and modish wife and set up a trade.[3] Among other things, Punch proposes to get elected to the Parliament by virtue of his vast influence "in all the corporations in England" and eventually "turn a great man". It is an aspiration which allows Fielding to put the following in Luckless' mouth: "Get you gone, you impudent rogue" - a phrase which despite the innocuous look that it wears (rather, because of it) is perhaps one of the subtlest quips that Fielding ever made on the "great man" who owed his greatness largely to his impudence.[4]

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1. Fielding, Works, I, p.288.
   In the Craftsman of April 21, 1733, Caleb meaningfully reminds the 'choleric old Beldame Mrs. Osborne' of 'her' statement in the London Journal of February 24, 1733, that ministers should not allow themselves to be bullied by others because 'if they are frighten'd, they are gone' and their 'Fall' can be dated 'from that very moment'. See Hervey (Memoirs I, 157-8) on Walpole's offer to resign and George II's refusal to 'forsake him'.
2. Works, I, pp.342 and 336.
3. Ibid, pp.326-27.
4. For 'impudence' being Walpole's chief stock in trade, see below, p. 95.

In the Tragedy of Tragedies, as in its original version, The Life and Death of Tom Thumb,[1] Fielding has attempted to cut Walpole to a size proportionate to his meagre (as they appeared to Fielding) capabilities and exiguous achievements. Convinced already that "nothing can be more burlesque than greatness in mean hands",[2] he tries to expose the essential "littleness" (or "meanness"[3]) and insignificance of the Great Man simply by rendering him identifiable with the pretentious homuncule of King Arthur's court. In order to effect this, Fielding makes little Tom Thumb the hero of his burlesque tragedy and not only confers upon him Walpole's patent epithet, "the Great", but also transfers to him the entire paraphernalia of Walpole's greatness - such as a grateful, confidence-reposing king, an infatuated queen, fawning adulators and rancorous enemies. There is something hypnotic in Tom's influence over his royal patrons which coaxes out of them an unbounded admiration for his dubious services and imperceptible triumphs. They regard him, with no apparent justification, the "Preserver" of their realm, procurer of their "Peace and Safety" and a superman who is more than a match for the combined strength of the men, giants and gods. Because they have

1. Both staged at Haymarket, Tom Thumb on April 24, 1730, and Tragedy of Tragedies on March 24, 1731.

2. Fielding's 'Pasquin' letter in the Common Sense for May 21, 1737.

3. In the fourth number of the Covent Garden Journal (dated 14 January 1752) occurs the following ironic definition of 'Great':
   'Applied to a thing, signifies bigness; when to a man, often littleness or meanness.'
   Pope held similar views. Writing to Gay on 13 July 1723, he said: 'those we call Great Men ... are really the most Little Creatures in the world' (Pope, Correspondence, II, 181).

such a high opinion of him, they voluntarily invest him with their authority and power and leave the entire management of the State affairs in his competent hands.[1] Tom's booby followers, the courtiers in place, whom he protects from the arm of the law, have nothing but words of highest praise for him. For them he is a mighty hero sent expressly by the Divine Providence to be the pillar of Arthur's state.[2] But in the eyes of his fulminating rival, who heads the malcontents, Tom is just an arrant impostor whose killing of the non-existent "giants" is "all a trick" to impress and mislead the credulous.[3] In addition to these physical appurtenances and evidences of Walpole's political power and greatness, Fielding, as Cross suggests, gives to Tom Walpole's "mental and moral characteristics" as well.[4] He gives him, for example, Walpole's magniloquence, which can be seen in Tom's claim (which only those who belong to his coterie will concede) of having conquered and killed the "giants"; Walpole's vaulting ambition, which is shown in Tom's aspirations for things much above his status and, also, in his determination to infest the land, with the Parson's blessings, with his "maggoty breed";[5]

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1. Works, I, pp.465, 503-04.
2. Ibid., 462.
   Fielding is here probably ridiculing those admirers of Walpole who regarded him 'a Wall by land and a Pole by sea'.
3. Works, I, p.473.
4. Cross, III, p.280.
5. Works, I, p.492.
   The 'maggoty breed' probably stands for Walpole's kith and kin as well as for his other political dependents. In a contemporary tract, Sir Robert Brass: or, The Intrigues, Serious and Amorous of the Knight of the Blazing Star (Lond., 1731), the phrase, 'servile fawning Maggots', is used to denote the self-multiplying placemen of Walpole.

Walpole's vanity, worldly wisdom, intolerance of rivals, susceptibility to female charms, and his affected disinterestedness in discharging his official duties.

But for the difference in the physique, which itself is not without meaning,[1] the resemblance between Walpole and Tom Thumb is indeed very close. Tom Thumb's "Life" seems to have been patterned after Walpole's "Life"; and because it is so patterned, the "Death" of Tom assumes special significance, the significance of a portent. Tom meets an inglorious death. In the very hour of his triumph he is swallowed up by a cow of a "larger than the usual size".[2] And

1. From the correspondence established by Noodle in the first scene of the play (Works, I, 462) between body and soul - the smaller the body, the bigger the soul - it could be argued that a 'mountain' like body, which surely Walpole's was, contained a 'mouse' like soul.

2. For a cow of abnormal proportions, which differs from that of the nursery tale in its size as well as in its behaviour, Fielding may have got a hint from Awnsham and John Churchill's Collection of the Voyages. According to a story related in this Collection (1704, vol.III, p.857) the 'Cow of Plenty' of a Hindu god, Inder, once assumed a 'shape three times bigger than her own' to destroy a tyrant rajah and his retinue. (For an application of this story to the contemporary politics, see the Craftsman for 21.10.1732). The cow in Tragedy of Tragedies, which comes rambling out of the 'streets' of the city to make short work of Tom is, however, of no celestial origin, and it represents, to my mind, the people in general whose supremacy over an insolent individual is symbolically asserted by Fielding. That Fielding had some such thing in his mind and, also, that he knew he was indulging in a bit of prophecy-making (which eventually proved true) while describing Tom's death, is borne out by the passage quoted on pages 40-41 from A Journey from this World. In this passage the allusion to 'the cow's belly' and Tom Thumb's annoyance on being reminded of it seem to refer to the circumstances of Walpole's downfall.

he is swallowed up for good. The cow, unlike the one in the nursery tale, does not disgorge him. It seems quite likely that in assigning such an inglorious and sudden end to his fictitious, swash-buckling hero, Fielding's aim was to give a timely warning to an actual, conceited and self-assured man who had grown so used to his power and significance as to develop a false sense of security and become altogether forgetful of the two most "instructive Lessons, viz. That Human Happiness is exceeding transient, and, That Death is the certain End of all Men ...".[1]

Before I have done with this play, I feel I must give my reasons for being so positive about its political allegory since most of the critics, finding no contemporary comments on the political implications of the play, have either completely refused to see any such allegory in it or preferred to remain non-commital.[2] It is indeed a curious fact that the Opposition journalists who were always on the look-out for uncomplimentary parallels for Walpole and who did, after all, discover some sort of connaturalness between Fielding's stupid courtiers, Noodle

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1. Preface to the Tragedy of Tragedies (Works, Vol.I, p.453).

2. Hillhouse (p. 9n), Hessler (pp.124-25) and Bannerji (p.28) are among those who maintain that, in this play, satire on Walpole is read only by 'those who are looking for just that', whereas Digeon (p.8), Dudden (I, 67), and Loftis (p.104) find its political meaning an enigma. So far only Wilcocks (p.70), Woods (pp.102-107) and, to a lesser degree, Godden (Appendix 'J'), and Cross (I, 103, 116; III, 280-81) have expressed their conviction that the play does contain very palpable hits on Walpole's 'bombast greatness'. But in support of this conviction nothing very convincing is offered.

and Doodle, and the "par nobile fratum", the Walpole brothers (Robert and Horace Walpole),[1] could not see any resemblance between the hero of the play and the Prime Minister.[2] Only after Walpole had resigned from premiership a queer journalistic effort was made to interpret the play in political terms by identifying "The Person who gives Name to the Farce, [the] little Hero [who] is to be destroy'd" with the fallen minister.[3] But this article was written in a mock-serious vein and, therefore,

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1. See the prefatory paragraph of A Norfolk Ballad concerning the Late Vienna Treaty (1731) and Fog's Journal for October 3, 1730. One point, however, is to be noted: that whereas the author of the ballad refers directly to Fielding's characters, Fog's comments are upon those who figured in a contemporary droll called The Generous Free Masons (not to be confused with W.R. Chetwood's ballad opera which bore a similar title and which also showed 'the Humours of Squire Noodle and his Man Doodle'). But the indebtedness of the unknown author of this droll, and also of Chetwood, to Fielding, who had immensely popularized the above mentioned names, is obvious, though it was Caleb who had made their first political use (see Craftsman of 7.4.1728 and State Hieroglyphicks: or, Caleb Decipher'd (1731); see also Hillhouse's note on these characters on page 155 of his edition of Tragedy of Tragedies).

2. They ignored this resemblance more by intention than by accident for it was someone from their side who had first compared Walpole with Tom Thumb. In a ballad called Robin's Glory, written in 1725 to ridicule Walpole's installation as a Knight of the Bath, we find the following opening lines:

   Ne'er was seen such a Sight
   Since Tom Thumb was a Knight,
   In the days of our Noble King Arthur.
   (Political Ballads, p.1).

   The reason why they ignored this resemblance in the Tragedy of Tragedies is not hard to seek: they simply could not reap any advantage from it. The slightest attempt on their part to identify Fielding's Tom Thumb with Walpole would have obliged them to admit by implication that the 'mountain of treason', Grizzle, and his followers represented (as actually they did) their party leaders. This, needless to say, would have done no service to them. For precisely the same reasons the Opposition journalists had to leave the Welsh Opera, so rich in political satire, entirely untouched.

3. The Daily Post, March 29, 1742.

those (such as Hillhouse) who deny it the importance Godden has conferred upon it are very much in the right. The most helpful and significant pointers to Fielding's satirical intentions (relative to the contemporary politics) in the play that I have come across and which, to my knowledge, have not so far been noticed by others are provided by Elizabeth Haywood and William Hatchett in their joint venture, The Opera of Operas, and by Fielding himself in his Lucianic fragment, A Journey from this World to the Next. The Opera of Operas, which was based upon the Tragedy of Tragedies (songs and a happy ending added to the original text), concludes with a scene in which the wizard, Merlin, revives all the characters (that is, the King and Queen, Tom and Grizzle, Lords and Commons, and so forth) and administers a piece of advice to them:

> Be chang'd from what ye were - let Faction cease,
> And ev'ry one enjoy his Love in Peace.

To this sensible appeal everyone responds favourably and even Grizzle, seeking pardon for his "late Rebellion", is reconciled with his rival, Tom Thumb. With concord and cordiality established among them, they sing (twice) a harmonious chorus to the following effect:

> Let fierce Animosities cease,
> Let all marry'd Couples agree
> Let each his own wife kiss in Peace,
> And end all their Cavils as we.[1]

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1. The Opera of Operas (1733), pp.30-32.

From these lines, in which one can easily see a direct reference to the 'faction' and the "fierce animosities" ushered in by the Excise crisis (the Opera was staged in the wake of the Excise Bill - on May 31, 1733), it is possible to infer that the political undertones of the Tragedy of Tragedies were not entirely inaudible to its audience and that they had, at least some of them, actually detected a close correspondence between its chief characters and the leading personages of the day.[1]

The passage I am going to quote from A Journey from this World occurs in its ninth chapter, which, like the preceding one, describes the Elysian "adventures" of the author, or the narrator:

> While my eyes were fixed on that monarch [Henry V] a very small spirit came up to me, shook me heartily by the hand, and told me his name was Thomas Thumb. I expressed great satisfaction in seeing him nor could I help speaking my resentment against the historian who had done such injustice to the stature of this great little man; which he presented to be no bigger than a span; whereas I plainly perceived at first sight he was a full foot and half ... I asked this little hero concerning the truth of those stories related of him, viz, of the pudding, and the cow's belly. As to the former, he said it was a ridiculous legend ... but as to the latter, he could not help owning

1. For another evidence, see above p.17.

> there was some truth in it: nor had he any reason to be ashamed of it, as he was swallowed by surprise; adding with great fierceness, that if he had had any weapon in his hand, the cow should have as soon swallowed the devil ... He spoke the last word with so much fury, and seemed so confounded, that, perceiving the effect it had on him, I immediately waved the story, and passing to other matters, we had much conversation touching giants. He said, so far from killing any, he had never seen one alive ...[1]

One would think it is here that Fielding has supplied further hints (in addition to those already given in the play, particularly in its elaborate Dramatis Personae) to his readers to help them recognize the man he had caricatured thirteen years ago.[2] The sentiments expressed here - the exchange of cordiality between the author and the "great little man", his satisfaction on finding that he was, after all, in the land of the blessed ones and not anywhere else, his discovery that Tom was not so "little" as he was generally reported to be - fit in exactly with the modifications Fielding had made in his views about Walpole since his withdrawal from the Champion.[3] Moreover, Tom's admission that he had killed no 'giants' - that is, accomplished nothing great or extraordinary[4] - his confusion and fierceness on being reminded of the incident

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1. Works, Vol. IV, pp.377-78.
2. Journey from this World was published in 1743 with the Miscellanies.
3. Martin C. Battestin, 'Fielding's Changing Politics and Joseph Andrews', PQ, xxxix [1960], 39-55.
4. But for this passage, Prof. Wood's suggestion (p. 105) that the 'giants' in the play stand for the Jacobites would have been quite acceptable.

that put an end to his pompous career - this time an obvious allusion to the Chippenham and Westminster elections - and his insistence that he was caught unawares and unprepared otherwise he would have warded off the catastrophe seem to point that Fielding did wish to identify Tom with Walpole in certain respects.[1]

In the Grub-Street Opera, the enlarged but unacted version of the Welsh Opera,[2] Fielding, while subjecting the entire contemporary political scene to contemptuous treatment, alludes in a particular way to such notable events and aspects of Walpole's many-sided life as his liaison with Maria Skerrett, his alliance with Queen Caroline and his bitter personal-cum-political quarrel with William Pulteney. Employing the allegory of an honest, though indolent, landlord and his roguish domestics, he presents

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1. The reports concerning Walpole's presence at the performance of Fielding's play - which are considered in the sixth chapter - need not disconcert us since it does not necessarily prove that the play is innocent of political satire. After all, it was not unusual for Walpole to lend countenance to the pieces that held him up to ridicule. His reaction to Gay's Beggar's Opera is a case in point (See Hervey, Memoirs I, 96; Biographia Dramatica [1812] Vol II, 55).

2. The Welsh Opera was performed on April 22, 1731, but Grub-Street Opera, though advertised several times was never put on stage. Only Genest (Account of the English Stage, III, 323) mentions one performance of it, but he cites no evidence. In the Preface of the Welsh Opera it is mentioned that the Grub-Street Opera was prevented from being staged 'by a certain Influence which has been very prevailing of late years'. Fielding denied it in the Daily Post of June 28, 1731, but that seems to have been the case.

Walpole under his incriminating nick-name, Robin,[1] and assigns to him his familiar role of an unscrupulous, swindling upper-servant.[2] As a butler in the household of Sir Ap-Shinken, a Welsh Squire, he is shown occupying a place of great advantage which by offering him unlimited opportunities for cheating his master has provided him with the means to enrich himself, to pamper his brother, to oblige his friends, to procure for himself a mistress, and to purchase a "little snug farm" to retire to whenever he is turned out of his place.[3] In the lady of the house (Caroline), Robin has found a useful ally and protectress who in return for the share he allows her in his spoils, renders him great services. She restores harmony between him and his "very good friend", Parson Puzzletext,[4] prevents his being called to account (which Robin dreads) and makes the efforts of others to dislodge him completely ineffective. These efforts are made by

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1. Bob Neuter (probably Pulteney) finds 'a disagreeable Aequivoque in the very sound of the name[Robin]' which makes it appear 'incompatible with the Trust of publick Money'. (Craftsman, 5 June, 1731).
   For another pun on 'Robin' and 'robbing', see Political Ballads, p.6. Though Fielding ridicules this cheap pun in the Grub-Street Opera, he himself used it in the Champion of 7 June 1740.
2. Walpole appears as a dishonest steward in several issues of the Craftsman (see, in particular, the issue of 2 September 1727 written by Swift and Dr. Arbuthnot) as well as in a number of tracts, such as the History of a Norfolk Steward (re-printed in the Appendix of the Third volume of the collected edition of the Craftsman). Swift, incidentally, called his housekeeper, Mrs. Brent, 'Sir Robert'.
   (Pope, Correspondence, III, 161; see also pp.22, 191 and II, 492).
3. Works., II, 67-8, 89, 110.
4. Ibid., 109-10 and 119-20. Puzzletext's identity is discussed in later chapters.

William (Pulteney), the coachman, who is Robin's most implacable enemy and who, though himself a cheat, has made the exposure of Robin's misdeeds his chief vocation. He brings most outrageous charges against him and welcomes the opportunity of fighting a duel with him.[1] He attacks Robin on all the conceivable grounds and points out not only his practice of putting self before service and paying more attention to the needs of his own kith and kin than to the interests of his master but also the steps taken by him to estrange the master from his tenants.[2] Some of William's charges are serious enough and most of them appear to be irrefutable as well. As a matter of fact, Robin himself admits his roguery before Sir Ap-Shinken when he impudently offers to entertain him (Sir Ap-Shinken) "with a pig of [his] own sow."[3] But despite all this, William's superiority over Robin remains unestablished. In the eyes of others, both William and Robin appear to be cast in the same mould and, therefore, merit hanging equally. The only difference that is to be found between them is purely accidental in nature. If Robin seems to be a greater rogue than William it is only because he, being an upper-servant, "hath had more opportunity to cheat" than William - or, for that matter, any other servant of Sir Ap-Shinken.[4]

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1. Ibid., 88-89. The duel between Robin and William is a burlesque of the one fought between Pulteney and Hervey. For Fielding's motives in replacing Hervey with Walpole, see page 180.
2. Works, II, 88-93.
3. Works, II, 122.
4. Ibid., 121. The fact that Fielding has shown some slight preference for Robin is discussed in chapter five.

Of all the plays of Fielding that have anything to do with the politics or personality of Walpole The Modern Husband[1] is of particular importance since it is with this play that he is supposed to have made a serious attempt to attract Walpole's attention and get into his good graces. Becoming, as most of the critics would have us believe, an admirer of Walpole for once, he dedicated this play, his most "important contribution to drama", to him in the hope of finding in him "a powerful sponsor" for it.[2] There is no denying the fact that the language in which the Dedication is couched is flattering in the extreme. The encomiums that Fielding showers on the "wise statesman" and "the generous patron" - extolling his efforts for peace and his services to the country and mankind, admiring his "humanity and sweetness of temper", wishing him success over his enemies - and the invitation that he extends to him to secure for himself lasting and "notable advantages" by protecting him in particular and the "Muses" in general, have, apparently, a ring of sincerity in them.[3] In any case there is nothing in them to arouse our suspicions. Nevertheless, our suspicions are aroused. And that because of Walpole's response to Fielding's meticulously penned appeal. As is admitted on all hands, he accepted the Dedication (though nobody knows for certain if Fielding had sought and obtained Walpole's formal permission for

1. Staged at Drury Lane on 14.2.1732.
2. Woods, 247-8; See also Cross I, 121, Hessler, 130, Dudden, 100 and Loftis, 130-31.
3. Dedication, The Modern Husband, Works, II, 165-66.

it) but vouchsafed no favour, no encouragement to the seemingly obsequious dedicator. Nor did he, to our knowledge, ever deign to grace any single performance of the play with his presence, though the royalty had done so once.[1] Why this indifference to a person upon whom he used to shine, as the reports go, in no distant past? Why this snub to an author whose pen could have counter-acted Opposition propaganda far more effectively than all his scribes put together? Or, to put it otherwise, why did Walpole, despite the intercession of Lady Mary Montagu,[2] despite his well-known liberality to his eulogists and despite his growing need for more talented eulogists (and apologists), decline to respond favourably to Fielding's overture and, thus, foolishly one would think, provided him with yet another excuse to drift further away from him? The importance of these questions, which arise in one's mind spontaneously whenever one comes to think of the 'history' of the Modern Husband, can hardly be over-emphasized, but, unfortunately, very few of Fielding scholars have bothered to take note of them. Those who have, have simply tried to explain them away by referring to Walpole's notorious distaste for polite literature and his rememberance of the treatment Fielding had meted out to him in the Welsh Opera. But this explanation is a bit too convenient to carry much conviction. Furthermore, we know for a fact that, notwithstanding his lack of interest in belles lettres,

1. On March 2, 1732.

2. Cross I, 120-21; Woods, 248. The source of this information is, however, given by neither of them.

it was not in Walpole's nature to disoblige those who could wield a pen, much less to give them any calculated affront. We also know that, notwithstanding his sharp memory and vindictive disposition, it was not his practice to allow petty injuries to dwell in his mind for long, much less to let go any advantageous proposition by them. In my opinion, a far more plausible explanation for Walpole's refusal to take the honorific phrases of Fielding's Dedication at their face-value is to be found in the play itself; and that in the character of Lord Richly, the "great man" (that is, the great rogue) of the Modern Husband, whom Fielding, perhaps deliberately, has endowed with some of those very despicable attributes with which Walpole's enemies had come to characterize him. That the resemblance between Richly and Walpole (mostly the Walpole of the Opposition tradition) is too close to be deemed fortuitous, a glance at Richly's character will make clear.

Richly is presented by Fielding as a lecherous, treacherous man of wealth and property, every single aspect of whose life (and whose attitude towards life) is typically and unmistakably Walpolean. He has Walpole's "greatness", his influence and power, his discriminating dispensation of favours, his paganism, and his depraved tastes and depraved morals. As a "great man" he is shown possessing and enjoying such essential trappings of false greatness as panders, puffers, parasites, supercilious porters and, above all, the levees where his vanity[1] (which by

1. For Walpole's vanity, see Pulteney's A Proper Reply to a Late Scurrilous LIBEL (1731), A Copy of the Paper drop'd in St. James's Park (1729), Hervey, Memoirs III, 773, Plumb, Walpole, II, 248.

being insatiable has made him comparable with a Leviathan[1]) is fed by "an abundance of poor wretches" who come "gaping for favours". But these favours are not to be had for nothing. Nor are they meant for every Tom, Dick and Harry. As a rule, Richly never wastes them on those who have outlived their usefulness and are now recommended only by their dire "need" or past services to the country. But he is too clever to say "no" to any of the numerous solicitors.[2] Lest they stop coming to him, he makes expectation-raising promises to one and all, keeps them perpetually on tenter-hooks and is so crooked as to take every possible advantage of their misery. He obliges "twenty" needy people to "subscribe themselves [his] cuckolds" just by dangling a promise of a place, which he has no intention

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1. Works, II, 175-78. The word 'Leviathan' was invariably used by the Opposition journalists for Walpole. In this connection, see 'Anti-Leviathan's' comments in the Craftsman of 15.3.1729 on John Henley's oration on 'fish' in which, pointing out Henley's omission of 'Leviathan' from his discourse, he defines it as 'a land-fish monster', which of course was meant to suggest Walpole. The above opprobrious connotation of the word is made more explicit by Pulteney in his ballad, The Honest Jury, where, referring to Duncan Campbell's prophecy about Caleb, he says:

   But one Thing remains, his Predictions to Crown,
   And that is to see the Leviathan down;
   (Political Ballads, 28; see the note on the last line as well)

   It is to be noted that the 'Remarkable Queries' of the Champion, when published separately in November 1740, were entitled, The Leviathan Hook'd. See also Jonathan Wild (Bk II, Ch.I - Works IV, 157) for Fielding's equation of Heartfree and Wild with a 'little fish' and a 'voracious water-hero'.

2. Works, II, 178-182.
   In describing Richly's levee Fielding was obviously making use of his own recent experiences at Arlington Street. This interesting fact is pointed out by 'Dramaticus' (of whom more later) himself in the Grub-Street Journal (No.117), where, objecting to the length of this particular scene, he admits the extraordinary relish of the people for satires on 'a great man's levee'. One has to remember that the only great man whose

to bestow on any.[1] Encouragements and favours of substance are reserved entirely for those who can cater to his low desire.[2] He is perfidious even to those whom he calls his friends. His profuse professions of "strictest friendship" neither induce him to extend his promised help in the House (where he has great influence[3]) nor do they deter him from attempting the honour of

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levees were being constantly satirized at this period was Walpole (see, the Craftsman of 12.12.1726, 28.3.1730 and 17.1.1736; A Dialogue which lately pass'd between the Knight and His Man John (1740?); The Fortunate Prince [1731] and John Kelly's [Kelly of the Inner Temple] The Levee [1741]). One has also to remember that the two poems that Fielding had addressed to Walpole, and which belong to this period (1730-31), also refer to Walpole's levees, but in terms which are anything but complimentary. So far as Richly's conduct at his levee and his views on the levee and levee-hunters are concerned (pp.178-82) they are virtually the same as Pillage's in Eurydice Hiss'd (Works, III, 408) and not much different from Walpole's (on this, see Hervey's letter to Henry Fox [Ilchester, 156] and his Memoirs I, 108-110). The following two passages show the striking similarity in Richly and Pillage's views in this respect.

> What a world of poor chimerical devils does a levee draw together? All gaping for favours, without the least capacity of making a return for them.
>
> But great men, justly, act by wiser rules;
> A levee is the paradise of fools.
>
> (Lord Richly in Modern Husband; Works, II, 182).

> Who'd wish to be the author of a farce,
> Surrounded daily by a crowd of actors,
> Gaping for parts, and never to be satisfied?
> Yet, say the wise, in loftier seats of life,
> Solicitation is the chief reward;
> And Wosley's self, that mighty minister,
> In the full height and zenith of his power,
> Amid a crowd of sycophants and slaves,
> Was but perhaps the author of a farce,
> Perhaps a damn'd one too. 'Tis all a cheat,
> Some men play little farces, and some great.
>
> (Pillage in Eurydice Hiss'd; Works, III, 408).

1. Works, II, 225.
2. Ibid., 224-25.
3. Ibid., 180, 189.

their wives.[1] He is a great admirer of cheap entertainments - such as tumbling - and stretches his "interest", which is fairly vast, to its utmost to make Mr. Crambo's bedlamite opera a success.[2] Religion and virtue, so far as Richly is concerned, have no meaning whatsoever. He wants the one to be totally banished out of the world and the other regarded no more tangible than the ghost in Hamlet, which "is here, there, everywhere, and nowhere at all".[3] Conscious of his immense wealth and significance, inflated by the adulation of his "flatterers and hireling sycophants ... whose honour and love [for him] are as venal as their praise",[4] Richly has come to treat "the rest of mankind as

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1. Works, II, 193.
That Walpole also was capable of doing such a thing is ruefully admitted by Hervey when he speaks of Walpole's attempts to seduce his wife (Hervey, Memoirs, I, 103-04).

2. Ibid., 190. The full title of Crambo's opera is The Humours of Bedlam. The name of the author and Richly's efforts for it make one suspect that Fielding is here again alluding to Walpole's patronage of Samuel Johnson's Hurlothrumbo (1729) rather than to an old forgotten skit which bore a similar title and was subsequently incorporated into Vanburgh's The Pilgrim. Richly's interest in Crambo's play - he guarantees its success - also reminds one of 'Jack Juniper's' Preface to The Deposing and Death of Queen Gin (1736) in which he refers to 'a Certain Gentleman in Power' whose approval is more necessary for a dramatist (for the success of his plays) than the acquisition of learning and knowledge.

3. Works, II, 191 and 224.
In this connection one has only to refer to Lady Mary Montagu's account (Works, I, 474) of a Houghton gathering at which Walpole had suggested jocularly to get 'NOT' removed from the Ten Commandments by means of a parliamentary legislation. For another, and more certain, evidence of Walpole's lack of reverence for things spiritual, see Hervey, Memoirs, III, 907.

4. Works, II, 244.

his tenants" and, accordingly, claims the atrocious privileges of a liege lord both over their property and honour.[1]

This portrait of Lord Richly is damning enough. I would not say that Walpole was its original but the fact cannot be denied that in every single feature of it, it bears the impress of an artist sufficiently familiar with the distorted representations of the Prime Minister which the political caricaturists of the period were busy sketching night and day. Fielding's indebtedness to them is beyond dispute. He has given to Richly exactly the same weaknesses, the same vices which the Opposition writers had detected in Walpole. And he has described these vices in the same language in which they were describing Walpole's. Because of this similarity, because of this ruthless debunking of the 'great man' one cannot help suspecting that the purpose the play (I mean the Richly part of it)[2] was to serve was totally

1. Ibid., 193.

2. Apart from the passages that concern Richly, it may be mentioned here that the main theme of the play is the exposure of the 'modern bubble' (p.193) in which a husband promotes his wife's liaisons in order to claim damages for criminal conversation from her gallants. Such a theme was not likely to please Walpole; not only because he also, being a willing cuckold, had some remote association with the 'modern bubble', but also because it was meant to reflect upon the scandalous Abergavenny-Liddel affair. Hervey's angry suggestion (in letter to Stephen Fox, Ilchester, 61) that the author of Medea, Charles Johnson, should 'have every bone in his skin broken for his insolence' in ridiculing that affair in his play, shows that attacks on Lord Abergavenny were not much appreciated in Walpole circle. Moreover, as Prof. Woods has pointed out (p.250) the phrase 'modern bubble' itself, and its companion phrase, 'ev'rything has its price' (Works, II, 193, 194), were respectively designed to bring back to the mind of the audience the great 'bubble' (which had made Walpole considerably unpopular) and his infamous words - 'All these men have their prices'.

different from the one we habitually deduce from its Dedication. And that purpose was, if one may be permitted to say so, rather to cast reflections (very severe reflections indeed) upon Walpole than to flatter him. Such a conclusion becomes all the more unavoidable when we take certain other factors into account: such as the date of the composition of the play, the closeness, if not exact correspondence, of this date to the period during which Fielding was seeking opportunities to be ushered into Walpole's presence (this accounts for the realism and bitterness of the Levee scene), the delay and caution - qualities rarely associated with Fielding's impecunious, hence prolific, muse - shown in getting the play staged.[1] Added to this, we have Walpole's reaction to it. As we have seen, he, unlike other readers of the play, simply refused to be taken in by Fielding's extra-friendly gesture. Obviously, he (or those who read the play for him) made no mistake about Fielding's latent intentions. When one considers all these incidents and particulars one is bound to become less prone to chime in with those who maintain that the Dedication of the Modern Husband embodies Fielding's serious,

1. The play was completed as early as September 1730 (Dudden, I, 100) but was staged eighteen months after, on 14.2.1732. This delay becomes all the more surprising when one thinks of Fielding's usual practice of turning the publicity gained by any particular event to his account without much loss of time. Had other considerations not prevailed, he would no doubt have stuck to his practice and fore-stalled Johnson's play by at least three months.

determined and unmistakable bid for Walpole's patronage, and, as such, it is of greater importance than the play itself.[1] To my mind it embodies no such bid and has no such importance. But by denying this I do not mean to suggest that the Dedication has no significance whatsoever; or that it is no more than just an exercise in the art of ironical composition to be classed with the Dedications of the Mock-Doctor and Tumble-Down Dick. Surely, the seemingly sincere compliments of it did not come from Fielding's heart, but, at the same time, there is no concealed venom in them either. The Dedication was written on purpose; it had an important part to play; and that, in all probability, was to act as a subterfuge and a palliative, to attenuate the causticity of satire on Walpole. Fielding had not fully forgiven Walpole for his humiliating (from Fielding's point of view) experiences at his levees two or three years before, but now, in April, 1732, much of his anger was gone and he was not particularly keen on antagonizing Walpole unnecessarily. The dedication of Modern Husband to Walpole was, therefore, an act of prudence, a product of after-thought and, possibly, a consequence of the advice of the sane and sagacious Lady Mary Montagu. Seen in this light, whatever resemblance this Dedication has with that of Lewis Theobald's Orestes pales into insignificance[2] and the account given

1. Brown, 35-37.

2. C.B. Woods, 'Fielding's Epilogue for Theobald', PQ, XXVIII (1949), 419-24.
Prof. Woods' contention that since Fielding's Dedication is patterned after Theobald's Dedication (to Walpole) of Orestes, to which Fielding supplied an Epilogue (this point is discussed in Chapter VI), the sincerity of the sentiments expressed in one should be regarded as unquestionable as in the other, would have

of the influence of the Drury Lane magnates on Fielding begins to look a bit exaggerated.[1]

As far as the other widely held belief - that the dedication of the Modern Husband to Walpole was a casus belli between Fielding and the Grub-Street Journal - is concerned, in my opinion that too requires some re-thinking. This erroneous view has been accepted by every student of Fielding without any reservation or hesitation;

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appeared far more convincing if the eighteenth century dedications had been less stereotyped (on this, see Fielding's Pasquin, Dedication of Historical Register and An Interlude in Works, vol. III pp.301-2, 335 , vol. VIII pp.63-68) or Fielding's devotion to Walpole as unflinching and as evident as Theobald's. Prof. Woods, and others as well, have, however, overlooked one very important point, namely, that there is a still closer resemblance between Fielding's play and Thomas Odell's ballad opera, The Patron, which was staged at the Haymarket on May 7, 1729. This opera of Odell is so rich in 'political innuendo' (Loftis, 103; strangely enough, 'the butt of its satire' is not clear to Loftis) that one suspects very strongly that it may have been one of the two anti-Walpole plays by suppressing which Odell had expected to get his gratuity restored by Walpole (See A Dialogue which lately pass'd between the KNIGHT and His Man JOHN; this pamphlet is without a date and the probable date given in the B.M. catalogue, 1740, is incorrect, for by then Odell had become Deputy Licenser). Odell had got this gratuity through the Earl of Sunderland, on whose death (1720) and Walpole's coming into power, it was taken away from him. Odell had always been attached to the Court party, but the very fact that he dedicated this play to the late Earl's son and heaped, in the Dedication, praises on Sunderland, the 'Great Minister' and 'real Patron' (and Walpole's most distinguished rival, too), whose virtues he hoped to glorify in his play by presenting a contrasting picture of a 'sham Patron' indicates that it was meant to displease, or, at least, disturb Walpole. Odell's sham Patron, Lord Falcon, is also a 'great man' - in fact, a 'Minister of State' - who enjoys being surrounded by solicitors and flatterers, rewards his pimps and whores with 'A publick Gratuity for a private Favour', and shows favours to Merit - who has been 'undone by depending' upon his words - only when he has proved himself useful to his 'Pleasures' by letting him seduce his supposed wife, is in every respect a replica of Walpole (of course the denigrated Walpole) and, to a very great extent, a prototype of Fielding's Richly.

1. For this, see Chapter VI .

such as by Cross who says:

> Now that he [Fielding] wore the Walpole badge and was associated with Pope's arch-enemy, Colley Cibber, he exposed himself to those heavier shots of Grub Street wit that were aimed to kill.[1]

by Dudden, who maintains

> Any connexion of a playwright with the detested actor-manager [Cibber] was sufficient of itself to damn the former in their eyes. But Fielding had not only brought out his play under Cibber's auspices; he had further dedicated it to Walpole, the bete noire of the Tory Party. Thus, in a two-fold way, he seemed to have alined himself with the Journal's enemies, and it was resolved that henceforth he should be handled without mercy.[2]

and by Loftis, according to whom "by the dedication Fielding made himself a target for the Grub-Street Journal".[3]

That Cross should hold such a view is quite understandable because, in the absence of Hillhouse's book on the Journal,[4] it was indeed "impossible to determine" who 'Dramaticus' - the man

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1. Cross, I, 123.
2. Dudden, I, 116.
3. Loftis, 131.
4. Hillhouse's The Grub-Street Journal was published in 1928.

who opened the campaign against Fielding - was. That Dudden should say exactly the same thing as Cross had said is also understandable, for his book is mostly a reproduction of Cross's findings. What is difficult to understand is the comment of Loftis who, as his foot-note indicates, had consulted Hillhouse's book on this event. Hillhouse has established the identity of 'Dramaticus'[1] and my contention that the Dedication of the play was not at all a contributive factor in the Journal's hostility towards Fielding (which had begun as early as December, 1730 and lasted up to May, 1736) is mainly based on this discovery. 'Dramaticus', according to Hillhouse, was Sir William Yonge, Pope's "Billy"[2] and one of Walpole's most devoted and loyal followers.[3] How Sir William's play came to be rejected by the Theatre Royal (hence his grudge against Fielding) and how his remonstrations could find a place in Pope's journal are puzzling facts no doubt, but they can be explained by his anonymity. But one thing is absolutely unbelievable: that he took an umbrage against Fielding simply because, or even partly because, Fielding had dedicated his play to Sir William's patron and chief. If this Dedication was indeed written with a view to flatter Walpole and cajole a living out of him, then Sir William Yonge, one of whose semi-official duties was

1. Ibid., 14n and 184.
2. Dialogue i, l.13 (Pope, Poems, IV, 298; see also 115-16, 303, 334).
3. Plumb, Walpole, II, 214. For Hervey's observations on Yonge, see Memoirs I, 35-37.

to recruit scribblers for Walpole and look after them,[1] would have been the last man to cudgel or criticise Fielding. Indeed, the strictures of 'Dramaticus' on the levee scene of the Modern Husband incline one to suggest that it may have been Yonge himself, who had both seen the play and read it carefully, who guaged the drift of Fielding's satire on the 'great man' and drew Walpole's attention to it.[2]

In Pasquin,[3] the play which according to Coxe gave much offence to Walpole,[4] Fielding presents a "comprehensive damnation" of Walpole's administration[5] and takes particular notice of the following prominent features of it: the election irregularities committed by Walpole's agents and nominees, the abuse of the court patronage, the pacific character of Walpole's foreign policy, and the Standing Army. In the persons of Lord Place and Colonel Promise (the names are significant), he introduces two exponents of Walpolean methods of electioneering and, accordingly, shows them conducting their campaign in an amusing manner. Lord Place and Colonel Promise are both courtiers who, in an emergency like this (elections to the

1. It was Yonge who secured the services of William Arnall and Matthew Concanen for the Ministry (Political Ballads, XV-XVII).
2. For more probable reasons for Grub-Street Journal's attacks on Fielding, see George Sherburn's article on Dunciad, Bk IV in Studies in English (University of Texas, 1944), 174-90.
3. Haymarket, 5.3.1736.
4. Coxe, Walpole, I, 515.
5. Loftis, 134.

Parliament), willingly forget "the pride of the Courtiers" and go all out to wipe off the disadvantages of being total strangers to the people of the borough they intend to represent. From the very beginning they assume an attitude which being very "obliging ... and familiar" gives the impression that they and the aldermen were "born and bred together." They drink with them the "prosperity to [their] Corporation", squeeze them civilly and conspicuously "by the hand", promise "some services", at present unmentionable, for the future, ingratiate themselves with their wives and daughters (since it is they who "rule the roost") and offer places to the voters in the Court, in the Army, and in the capacious departments of "Customs and Excise."[1] They have no policy statement to make for they represent a party which though rich in resources is ideologically bankrupt. But one statement that they make is revealing enough. Following the example of their patron and leader, they make no bones about announcing their determination of getting the "low, dull, mechanic trade" of "the canaille" completely extirpated from the country once they get inside the Parliament.[2] But this they fail to accomplish as, for once, their "direct bribery" and court influence prove of little value when pitted against the "indirect bribery" and "dry blows" of the local candidates. But their defeat does not disconcert them in the least. Knowing as they do (what

1. Works, vol. III, pp.268-9, 276-79, 281-83.
2. Ibid., 278.

Miss Mayoress only wishes) that there are "some friends above" who in matters of controverted elections can, and will, distinguish "the right side from the left" they (still unaware of the "good turn" Mrs. Mayoress has done for them) propose to get the verdict of the electorate over-ruled simply by petitioning against it.[1]

Walpole's "Peace" and its enigmatic appendage, the Standing Army, are ridiculed in Pasquin on several occasions. They are ridiculed, for example, in the allusion to the waxen army, in Mrs. Mayoress' conviction that the Standing Army, though perpetually static and undeployed, is still a useful thing, in the long and unprofitable association of the Irish drummer with the Army, in the inability of Common-Sense to grasp the subtleties of the "present" Peace and, above all, in the unconvincing, though spirited, defence of it by Miss Mayoress.[2]

So far as "direct personal hits at Walpole" are concerned, Pasquin is not so completely devoid of them as some of the critics think or as "the Adventurer in Politicks" preferred to believe.[3] Personal hits, aimed directly at Walpole and no one else, occur more than once in this play and are easily discernible in Sir Harry's tirade against the Courtiers who spend public money

1. Ibid., 294-95.
2. Ibid., pp.282-3, 280, 320, 312, 289-90.
3. C.B. Woods, p.17; the Daily Gazetteer for May 7, 1737.

on houses and pictures, and in Miss Mayoress' allusion to the mysterious "somebody" who makes it possible for the anile Mrs. Osborne to distribute the copies of the Gazetteer gratis.[1] But, far more pointed and offensive allusions to Walpole are to be found in the second part of the play, in Mr. Fustian's tragedy, where besides equating in Dunciad fashion the probable consequences of the triumph of Ignorance with the actual ones of Walpole's diuturnal reign,[2] Fielding uses some of those very appellations which had come to designate Walpole. It can safely be assumed that those of his audience who had any acquaintance with the publications of the Opposition press or, at least, with Paul Whitehead's State Dunces, stood in no need of A Key to Pasquin[3] to discover the man Fielding had glanced at in the lines describing the ascendancy of "the greatest blunderer" over the wise, or in the emphatic, though somewhat belated, assertion of Common-Sense that under her sway "No fool could ever possibly be great."[4]

With the similarity between Walpole and Harlequin already established and popularized by the 'political physiognomists', Fielding obviously found it easy to infuse some special meaning into a play like Tumble-Down Dick[5] and make his exposure of the

1. Works, III, 272, 289.
2. Works, III, pp.325-26.
3. Such a key, 'Address'd to Henry Fielding Esq^re,' was advertised in the London Daily Post on 17.5.1736 though it already was in the market in March 1736 (Gent. Magazine, VI, March 1736).
4. Works, III, 321.
5. Staged at Haymarket, April 29, 1736.

"fourberries" and cheap harlequinades of the "great Lun" an exposure of the supposedly iniquitous, inelegant and un-commendable antics of the great political pantomimist, Robert Walpole, as well.[1] In order to hold both Walpole and John Rich up to ridicule, he gives an absurd parentage to Harlequin - he is an offspring of Fortune by an ass - and describes vividly some of his wild "pranks" for which he has been damned by the people a "thousand time".[2] Made presumptuous and over-weening by the extensive power that Jupiter (that is, the king)[3] has granted to him, he is described as making the most flagrant misuse of that very power. He employs it to turn "all nature topsy-turvy", to humiliate the lesser "gods" and to take liberties even with Jupiter, whose reign he had almost succeeded in jeopardizing when he had attempted to carry "all the devils in hell up to heaven by [means of] a machine."[4] Harlequin's mischief-making

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1. For Walpole's association with Harlequin, see the following:
   (i) English Stage Italianiz'd, or Harlequin a Butler, a Pimp, a Minister of State (1727).
   (ii) State Hieroglyphicks (B.M. 8122.f.18) in the second print (frontispiece of the 2nd volume of the Craftsman) of which Walpole appears as Harlequin with a Blue String.
   (iii) The Craftsman for 2.12.1727, 30.12.1727, 13.1.1728 and 28.6.1735. In the last mentioned issue a correspondent refers to the 'monkey tricks' of the actors in the pantomimes and then says ---
   I wish I could not say that our political comedians have likewise imitated Them in this Particular.
2. Works, III, 445, 446.
3. See below, page [illegible].
4. Works, III, 445; probably an allusion to the Excise dragon, see the note referred to above.

proclivities have been vastly enhanced by the Genius of Gin.[1] By means of the "magic wand" given by her, he can now make everything under the sun yield to his command. He can not only alter the postures and appearances of other persons but himself assume different shapes and, thus, remain incognito while playing his pranks. But the patience of the deities is now exhausted. They cannot put up with his insolence any further and continue to dance "jigs" with the devils. Jupiter, who himself is convinced of the undesirability of leaving so much power in Harlequin's hands, realizes the justness of their complaints and promises to "revoke" the "grant" he had made in his favour.[2]

Besides these indirect hits, there are several other gibes and innuendoes upon Walpole in this play. Its very sub-title, Phaeton in the Suds, was probably chosen by Fielding to remind the public not only of Pritchard's Fall of Phaeton, which he was burlesquing, but also of the vast literature on the erring,

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1. Works, III, 436.
Sheridan Baker (PMLA, LXXVII) identifies the Genius of Gin (which 'rises out of a tub') with Henley who used to deliver his orations from his 'gilt tub' (Pope, Poems, V, 96). But this looks rather far-fetched. How could Henley confer any power on Walpole? The Genius of Gin probably represents the gin itself, the 'Queen Gin' or 'Madame Geneva', which lay in state in tubs in front of the shops of distillers and retailers during the period the Gin Act was under consideration. Fielding's meaning in this scene is not much different from that of a contemporary epigramist who, addressing Walpole, said:
Why will you make us coolly think
If you'd govern, we must drink,
implying that the chief beneficiary from popular addiction to gin was Walpole himself. (For this epigram, see Gentleman's Magazine, October, 1736).

2. Works, III, 445. This of course was one of the pious hopes of Fielding. But he was not the only person given to this sort of wishful thinking.

blundering, foundering coachman, Robert Walpole.[1] But he makes no use of this thread-bare allegory beyond the title page. Instead, he builds up a partial resemblance between Walpole and Phoebus who, like Walpole, is a "great man" and, as such, has his "great chair" (as Punch has in the Author's Farce)[2], his whore and his "fox-hunting"[3]. Even the song on gin and Jupiter's casual remark on a "great man's" promptness in rewarding his pimps appear as politically inspired and directed at Walpole in particular.[4] But, perhaps, the naughtiest hit at Walpole is made in a passage where adulterous Clymene is shown assuring her injured husband that in making him a cuckold her chief consideration was the improvement of his breed.[5] One feels strongly tempted to suggest that Fielding, who was quite knowledgeable about the scandals of "that great cuckold's school", London,[6] while writing this part of the burlesque had no affair of the polite society more in his mind than the one involving Catherine Shorter, Walpole's breed-mending wife, Carr Hervey, and their precocious child, Horace Walpole.[7]

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1. The most obnoxious use of this allegory - which was first applied to Walpole by Erasmus Philip in his Country Gentleman - was made in a pamphlet (called A Hue and Cry after a Coachman) dropped in St. James' Park on 5 January 1729, at a time when Queen Caroline was having a walk. In this pamphlet Walpole is described as 'an ignorant, forward, positive, unexperienced, head-strong blundering Driver' and extremely scurrilous things are said about his person, manners, character etc. For further instances, see the Craftsman for 5.12.1726, 30.12.1726, 20.3.1727, 1.7.1727 and 20.12.1729, and another pamphlet, The Sly Subscription: or the Norfolk Minister(1733).
2. Works, I, 318.
3. Works, III, pp.432,441; for these allusions, see Baker, PMLA, LXXVII, 221-31.
4. Ibid., 435, 446.
5. Ibid., 443.
6. Ibid., 444.
7. For this scandal, see Egmont, II, p.431; Lady Mary Montagu's Works, I, p.73; and Pope, Poems, vol.IV, pp.321 and 389.

In his most provocative play, The Historical Register for the Year 1736,[1] which as far as Walpole is concerned is more than "an amusing ironic revue" of just one year,[2] Fielding ridicules Walpole's pretensions and capabilities as a politician, his incompetence in handling the foreign affairs, his pre-occupation with Ways and Means, his patronage system, and his insidious dealings with the unprincipled and unstable elements within the Opposition. In the very first scene of the play he identifies Walpole with the First Politician, the "dumb Gentleman" who, without giving any "instances of his wisdom" has acquired the dubious reputation of being an omniscient person merely by looking wise.[3] He is deemed the greatest politician of his time not only because he can "guard against dangers which nobody knows of" (that is, which do not exist) but also because he is a past master in "the chief art of a politician", which is nothing else than keeping one's politics inscrutably secret - indeed so inscrutably secret that "nothing but an inspir'd understanding can come at 'em."[4] The First Politician sticks so tenaciously to this wise

1. Staged at Haymarket on March 21, 1737.
2. Woods, p.537.
3. Works, III, 350.
4. Works, III, 349 and 356.
   This characteristic of Walpole - which was a fact since Hervey too speaks of it (Memoirs, II, 807) - is emphasized in the following two lines of a ballad published in 1730.
   > We talk, and we guess at the Worst and the Best,
   > The Secret the Great Man does keep in his breast;
   > (Political Ballads, p.40)

   also in the Craftsman of 23.1.1731, where we are informed that
   > as Secrecy is very often a necessary Quality in Statesmen, He [Walpole] affects a dark, mysterious, unintelligible Method of Proceeding upon all Occasions . . . and therefore consolidates the whole Council

rule that even while presiding over a cabinet meeting he retains his taciturnity and refuses to enlighten his blundering colleagues in their deliberations. But the mere fact that he holds his tongue at a time when they abandon ticklish foreign affairs and apply themselves to fiscal affairs with almost culpable unanimity and avidity carries an insinuation that their decisions have his tacit approval and, furthermore, that his silence and grave looks are just a mask to cover his limitations and ignorance which are of a piece with those of his stupidly voluble factotums.[1]

In order to ridicule Walpole's 'ministerial' capacity and his patronage system in this play, Fielding resorts to the State-Stage parallel and identifies him with Pistol, the "prime-minister theatrical" who "loves to act [the King] behind the scenes,"[2]

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of the Nation into Himself.

and, more pertinently, in the Vision of the Golden Rump (in Common Sense for 19.3.1737) where it is mentioned that only an 'Oracle' can tell us about the current affairs - about 'European Rulers [and the] fate of Corsica'. The dumb oracle in the Hist. Register is supposed to know about all these affairs. Fielding refers to this aspect of Walpole's political 'skill' again in the Champion of 14.2.1740, saying that 'the chief excellence, and earnest endeavour of minister is to avoid being understood by any of his fraternity'. See also Gay's phrase, 'profound penetrating politician', in Polly (I, iv), which was also meant to reflect on Walpole.

1. For Lord Hervey's criticism of the Historical Register (particularly of this scene) which, according to him, exposed 'the Ministry before the Eyes of the REPRESENTATIVES of all the Princes in EUROPE', see Appendices A and C. Fielding's rejoinder to it is reproduced in Appendix B.

2. Works, III, 364 and 367; See Craftsman of 17.1.1736 on Walpole's strutting about as a 'mock-monarch'.

with Ground-Ivy, who believes in carrying the things in the house "against the voice of the people", and with the "bastard of Apollo", who has discovered that for a place of any significance possession of merit, learning, virtue, honesty, is not as considerable a qualification as "being a blockhead."[1]

In the concluding scene of the Historical Register Fielding brings Walpole on the stage again so that he may give a public demonstration of that "very pantomime trick" of his which has outclassed even the "fourberries" of the greatest pantomimist (John Rich) of the day - the trick of cheating the gullible patriots of that very same money with which he bribes them out of their feigned concern for their country. Dubbed as "Quidam the fiddler"[2] and characterized as "a pure impudent fellow" who, like the bastard of Apollo, can stand the hisses of the people, he is shown appearing at a crucial moment when the discontented "Patriots" are lamenting the deplorable condition of the country. To convince them that they are in the wrong and that they are neither the "poor dogs" they think, nor is their country in so

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1. Works, III, pp.370, 366-68.
2. 'Who is this Quidam, that turns the patriots into ridicule, and bribes them out of their honesty?' Fielding raises this question in the Dedication of the play simply to find an excuse to equate Walpole with the devil. Referring to Quidam's 'diabolical' conduct, he draws the offensive conclusion: 'Who but the devil could act such a part?' (Works, III, 340; Walpole appeared as 'the angel of darkness" for the first time in a 1717 pamphlet, The Defection Considered). Quidam's etymological affinity with Quidnunc has been universally recognized but one interesting fact has not been noticed; which is, that just a few years later Fielding himself was named 'Lord Quidam' by his friend, Charles Hansbury Williams, a strong Walpolite, in his poem Peter and Lord Quidam (Ilchester, Charles H. Williams [Lond. 1928], pp.70-71).

rotten a state as they imagine, he uses the most effective argument, the argumentum pecuniarum, which at once dispels their fears and makes them admit, since they are poor no longer, that everything is all right. Quidam, pleased with his easy conquest, is, however, in no mood to lose even "one half penny by his generosity" and, for that reason, he asks them, "since the bottle is out", to "hang sorrow, cast away care", and "e'en take a dance", knowing that in the frenzy of the dance the money will fall through their perforated pockets (the "patriots" do not know they "have a hole in their pockets", but Quidam does) and he shall be able to get it back. Things turn out exactly as he had hoped and the "patriots", while dancing to his "tunes" and attending to his "motions", drop all the money he had given them. Quidam picks up the coins artfully and then sneaks away, leaving the poor, penniless dupes behind to pay the whole reckoning "out of their own pockets".[1]

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1. Works, III, 374-5.
Though Fielding's meaning is different, the dropping coins of the 'Patriots' remind one of Pope's lines on Sir Christopher Musgrave:

> Once, we confess, beneath the Patriot's cloak,
> From the crack'd bag the dropping Guinea spoke,
> ('Epistle to Bathurst', ll.65-66; Pope, Poems, III, ii, p.92).

Similarly, the 'Patriots' dancing to Quidam's tunes make one wonder if Fielding had the following ministerial version of the 'Patriot' dance in his mind ---

> So certain Patriots, just a Set,
> As well united, as well met,
> Dance thro' the Maze of Politicks,
> And show a thousand merry Tricks;
> A Wight behind the curtain stands,
> Who tunes their voice, and guides their hands;
> They catch the gaping Vulgar's praise,
> Tho' but the Puppets which he plays;
> Yet in each case, the dance once done,
> They find themselves where they begun.

The one scene of this play to which the critics have not paid that much "strict attention" as Mr. Medley had solicited and about the deeper meaning of which they are, therefore, more or less silent, is its allegorical "auction" scene. But, this silence notwithstanding, there is no doubt about the fact that this scene too, which certainly is "the best scene in the whole performance", like every other scene in the Historical Register,[1] was mainly designed to ridicule Walpole. Our suspicions in this respect, which are first aroused by the very effort of Medley to prepare the audience for the reception of its "pretty deep" jokes, become confirmed when we find Mrs. Screen taking her customary place in the front row of the idle bidders and Mr. Hen mounting the pulpit.[2] But as the scene progresses and the matchless, rare "curiosities" of the "choice cabinet" of Mr. Peter Humdrum are announced one by one, the political bias of the auction scene becomes unmistakable. The reversible "curious piece of Political Honesty", which can be turned as often as one would wish and of which "several great men have made their birthday-suits";[3] the

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These lines were published in the Daily Courant and reproduced in the Gentleman's Magazine of April, 1731.

1. The 'female Politicians' scene (Works, III, pp.353-55) is no exception since here, too, one can see an indirect allusion to the commonly held belief, which was true only to a very limited extent, that women (Caroline, mistresses of the King and minister's) had a vital and vicious influence over Walpole's administration. (See Hervey, Memoirs, III, 748; Halsband, Lady Mary, 171).
2. Sheridan Baker (PMLA, 77) is probably right in suggesting that Mr. Christopher Hen is not just the celebrated auctioneer Mr. Christopher Cock metamorphosed but also Orator Henley. A combination of Henley's talents with those of Cock's was first suggested by James Ralph, Fielding's friend and assistant at the Haymarket, in The Taste of the Town (1731). Mrs. Screen is of course Pope's Phryne (see below, p. 88)
3. Lord Both-Sides, who obtains this article for five pounds, is

"delicate piece of Patriotism", which is totally different from the "old Patriotism", but still quite useful and serviceable at a "Country" election, and, for that reason, acceptable to the courtiers; the "bottle of courage" which can be used profitably by the peace-loving, non-stirring Army officers; the "Three grains of Modesty" which is a commodity completely "out of fashion" for Mrs. Screen; the "three-hundred volumes in folio" of the wit jointly owned by Messrs. Hugh Pantomime (John Rich) and William Goosequill (William Arnall), one the composer of the entertainments and the other "of political papers in defence of a Ministry"; the capacious but "clear conscience" of a judge and a bishop;[1] the "Interest at Court"; and the "Cardinal ['s] Virtues":[2] all these interesting items seem to suggest most emphatically that the indefatigable, "celebrated virtuoso" and Robert Walpole - himself a virtuoso of a sort[3]-were not two different persons.[4]

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probably Lord Tyrconnel, George II's 'puppy' who never voted 'twice together on the same side'.
(Hervey, Memoirs, I, 162).

1. A hit aimed at the bench of the Bishops and Judges in the Lords. (see below, p. 114).

2. The pun on the cardinal virtues was undoubtedly meant to tickle the audience at the cost not of Cardinal Fleury but that of another cardinal, the Cardinal Wolsey of the 18th century. (see p.71)

3. Tom Virtuoso, that is, Robert Walpole, notifies the sale of his prized collection in the Craftsman of 13 September 1729.

4. Besides the innuendoes noted above, the following statements of Mr. Banter also refer to Walpole: 'who the devil would bid for them [the heavy 'wit' of John Rich and W. Arnall] unless he was the manager of some house or other?' and 'I know a shop where I can buy it [the interest at Court] for less'.

In Eurydice Hiss'd,[1] the play which along with the Historical Register served to precipitate the long-threatened Licensing Act, Fielding pretends to be purely auto-biographical in his description of "The Rise, Progress, Greatness, and Downfall [sic] of Mr. Pillage"[2] but in actuality he makes the political career of Walpole his main concern and alludes through the chief incident of the play - the damnation of his own "Eurydice" - to the Excise project in particular.[3] Employing his favourite State-Stage parallel once again he presents Walpole as Mr. Pillage,[4] a theatre-manager-cum-farce-writer (and a 'great man' as well) who has reached the "top and pinnacle" of that "farcical greatness" which in a "merry tragedy" as well as in human life is invariably attended upon by a nemesis. He is shown enjoying the honours and the privileges (which include, being "follow'd, flatter'd and ador'd by a crowd of dependants")[5] of his exalted position, and, with a mind warped by an unrelieved consciousness of his own consequence, not only comparing himself with the "mighty

1. Haymarket, 13.4.1737.
2. from an advertisement in the Daily Advertiser, No. 1953 (dated 29.4.1737).
3. Egmont (II, 390) was quick to discover this fact. But the 'mighty farce' also stands for Walpole's Administration as a whole. This is inferable from the allusion to the Gin Act (Works, III, 417).
4. Walpole was given this Jonsonian nomenclature by Caleb D'Anvers (actually Chesterfield, according to Sichel - Bolingbroke, the Sequel, 253) in the Craftsman of 27 February, 1727.
5. Works, III, p.408.

minister" of the past, Cardinal Wolsey,[1] himself an author of a "damned farce", but emulating him too by adopting that very erratic policy and that very high and mighty attitude which had made Wolsey so unpopular and had hastened his doom. Like him, Pillage has a vanity which is fed only by the adulation of his "sycophants and slaves",[2] an urge to act as an autocrat, a concern for immediate gain, an indifference for the verdict of the "after times", an unsatiable hunger for people's money, and an undisguised contempt for their wishes.[3] He has hitherto been cramming his 'farces' (government measures), worthless each one of them, down the throat of an unappreciative public with the help of his hired supporters; but his supreme ambition is to see the day when, daunted by the sheer strength of his party, none will even dare to hiss in the house.[4] For this very reason he has all along been swelling the number of his actors (placemen) - an unjustifiable and unwise act since it obliges him to raise his "prices on town" and, thus, earn more and more of people's displeasure. But for this he does not care in the least. The good will of the people and Butler's ever-lasting fame are the things for which he has no need. As long as his friends are at his back and his pockets

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1. Ibid;
   See Memoirs of Wolsey (1731) dedicated 'to a certain gentleman who takes Wolsey's character to himself', and Pope's Epilogue to Satires, Dialogue I, ll.51-52 which run as follows:
   Sejanus, Wolsey, hurt not honest Fleury
   But well may put some statesmen in a Fury
   (Poems, IV, pp.301-02).
2. Works, III, p.408. This trait is present in Lord Richly too.
3. Ibid; pp.408, 413.
4. Ibid; p.412.

are filled with people's "pence", he is ready to defy the town and expose himself to eternal damnation.[1]

Pillage's immediate concern, however, is to ensure the success of his latest "mighty farce". Since he has "many enemies" he apprehends much trouble, to prevent which he employs his usual tactics. He musters his supporters, bribes them with money, places and promises and, assuming for once an attitude more supplicatory than condescending, solicits their presence in the house on the "trial day".[2] But when the time comes his tried methods prove ineffective and his farce after some initial success is roundly damned by the audience once they begin to see through its "shallow plot".[3] Even his henchmen, who had formed a formidable party in the house, forgetting the support they had pledged, join others in condemning it. Pillage, discarded by everyone - only Honestus refuses to leave him[4] - broods over the mishap and realizes somewhat belatedly how mistaken he was in placing his trust in "the frail promise of uncertain friends"

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1. Works, III, pp.412-14.
2. Ibid., pp.409-11,413.
3. Ibid., pp.417-18.
   Fielding has drawn an exact parallel between the reception of the Excise bill and that of Eurydice. This point is discussed at some length in the 3rd chapter (see page 121).
4. There has been much speculation about the identity of Honestus. He has been identified with the Earl of Scarborough who had refused to vote for the Excise bill but had continued to support Walpole in other matters, with the Earl of Chesterfield (and men like him) who had lost his place for opposing the bill, and with the independent members of parliament (Egmont is counted as one of them, but he had publicly defended Walpole's scheme). The views of Scarborough, Chesterfield and a few other 'honest' men of the period on public life were no doubt somewhat like

instead of "the impartial judgment of the town".[1] But as far as the farce is concerned he is impenitent. Refusing to behave like "a good pious criminal" and preferring to pass out "with a lie in his mouth", he denies the "fact" even after receiving the sentence,[2] and insists that

By Jove there never was a better farce.[3]

The plays in which Fielding pays just a fleeting attention to Walpole are the following: The Coffee House Politician, The Letter Writers, The Lottery, The Mock-Doctor, The Intriguing Chamber-maid, and Don Quixote in England.[4]

In Coffee House Politician Fielding alludes to the eternal paradox of Walpole's politics - his ceaseless efforts for peace and simultaneous preparations for war.[5] In Letter Writers he has introduced two derogatory remarks on 'great man'. One is found in Jack Commons' statement - "half the great men in history are cuckolds on record", and the other in Risque's, when he says

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Honestus', but their attitude towards Walpole was not exactly the same as Honestus' is towards Pillage. What Spatter says of Honestus - 'the man who will not flatter his friend in prosperity, will hardly leave him in adversity' - cannot, therefore, be applied to any of them. To my mind, Fielding has simply idealized himself in the character of Honestus. If Honestus represents any individual then that individual could only be Fielding.

1. Works, III, p.419.
2. Ibid., 408.
3. Ibid., 419; For Walpole's inveterate belief in the soundness of his scheme see below, p.119.
4. Staged, respectively, at Haymarket (23.6.1730), Haymarket (24.3.1731), Drury Lane (1.1.1732), Drury Lane (23.6.1732), Drury Lane (15.1.1734), Haymarket (5.4.1734).
5. Works, I, pp.362 and 412.

that had he been half so dexterous and painstaking in serving (that is, in promoting the amours of) a "great man" as he has been for his master, he would have been "a Captain or Middlesex justice long ago".[1] Yet another allusion to the 'great man', by no means a complimentary one, occurs in the Lottery[2] - a play which was itself designed to criticise the abuses of the State-sponsored lotteries. The Intriguing Chamber-maid has some opprobrious words on the merchants which, since they are uttered by the Courtiers,[3] suggest that they were in all probability meant to revive the unpleasant memory of Walpole's own phrase, "the Sturdy Beggars". In the Mock Doctor, Fielding, besides caricaturing Walpole's none-too-happy conjugal life in the Gregory-Dorcas scenes,[4] alludes to his quackery and pills,[5] and condemns him indirectly, but not less vehemently, in a song in which "the cursed power of gold" is blamed for setting the "great" on tricking and robbing the "poor" as well as for placing "the fool and knave" above "the wise and brave".[6] Don Quixote has only one possible allusion to Walpole (excluding the remarks on

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1. Works, II, pp.7 and 8.
2. Ibid., 149.
3. Works, III, pp.45-46.
4. Works, II, 271-75, 302-3.
5. The references to 'quacks' and 'pills' of course evoke Dr. Misaubin, to whom Mock Doctor was ironically dedicated. But Walpole also was a quack of a sort; for this, see The Craftsman of 12.12.1726 and 15.7.1727 which make mention of Dr. Robert King of Arlington Street and his 'Golden Specific', The Quack Triumphant (Political Ballads, 81-85), The Fortunate Prince (1734; Act II, Sc. 5), Prints and Drawings (B.M., Print No.1931) and The True History of Dr. Robin Sublimate (1733).
6. Works, II, 290.

ambassadors and on the Standing Army) and that in the ambitious and emulative Sancho's (a would-be "wise-governor") adumbration of the sole occupation of the "wise-governors", which is described as nothing but plundering the people as fast as they can.[1] These somewhat driftless remarks excepted, the offensiveness of this play, from Walpole's point of view, is almost entirely confined to its Dedication in which Fielding not only praises Chesterfield, Walpole's enemy, but even goes on to reprehend Walpole, one of "the powerful sons of dulness", for his indifference to men of "wit and humour" as well as for his disparaging observations on "Patriotism",[2] the observations to which strong exception was taken by others besides Fielding.[3]

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1. Ibid., III, 103-04. Note Sancho's preparedness, like Robin's in Grub-Street Opera (II, 110), to be turned out of his post once he has made his fortune.

2. Works, III, 57-58.
   For Walpole's remarks on 'Patriotism', see Cobbet, XI, 1286, Hervey, Memoirs, I, 238 and Coxe, I, 757.

3. Such as by Pope in Epilogue to the Satires, Dia i, l.34 (Poems, IV, 300).

CHAPTER III

SALIENT FEATURES OF WALPOLE'S PRIVATE AND PUBLIC LIFE AS SATIRIZED BY FIELDING

After having taken notice in the preceding chapter both of the obvious and probable allusions to Walpole that lie scattered in Fielding's fourteen plays, it seems but essential that, in order to obtain a clearer and more coherent view of Fielding's treatment of his great contemporary, I should bring these allusions together and examine them at some length. These allusions, as already seen, touch upon almost every single aspect of Walpole's life (specially those which had earned some sort of notoriety with the people) and give, therefore, to Fielding the signal distinction of being the only man of letters of his time to deal with the affairs and activities of a virtually despotic minister in so extensive and so facetious a manner. I propose to group these allusions under the following heads and discuss them accordingly:

A. The allusions of a strictly personal nature.

B. The allusions to Walpole's public life.

A. The Allusions of a Strictly Personal Nature

As compared with his treatment of Walpole's public career (which we shall be examining shortly), Fielding is somewhat restrained and sparing in dealing with his private life. Through innuendoes and insinuations he does allude to such personal

trivia as Walpole's name and nick-names, his physical appearance and his estate, his convivial habits and his faith, his conjugal life and extra-marital affairs, but all this in a style and manner which are always flippant and almost always casual. He uses Walpole's christian name, Robert, in two plays[1] and its familiar variants, Robin and Bob - which ever since the days of Gay's epoch-making opera had become exclusively applicable to Walpole[2] - on two other occasions,[3] without forgetting to provide them with an un-savoury and un-flattering context.[4] Of the numerous well-known nick-names of Walpole, Fielding employs only two (or three, if we treat 'Quidam' as a latinized equivalent of 'Mr. Somebody' and 'a certain gentleman who shall be nameless' - the two pet phrases coined by the Opposition journalists for Walpole), Pillage and Wolsey, both picked from the columns of the Craftsman and both calculated to serve a purpose identical with that of the writers of those columns, namely, to reflect upon Walpole's greed, arrogance, lust for power and self-aggrandizement. With the exception of the instances just cited,

1. In Mock-Doctor (Works II, 273-4) and Historical Register (Works III, 367).
2. See Gagey, Ballad Opera, p.45.
3. In the Grub-Street Opera (Works, II, 61 and 125) and Dedication of the Historical Register (III, 338, 40).
4. Squire Robert of the Mock-Doctor, whose quixotic zeal for keeping peace amongst his neighbours earns him only ridicule, and Robert (ostensibly Robert Faulconbridge of Shakespeare's Life and Death of King John) of the Historical Register, who is described as an insignificant and easily dispensable character remarkable only for 'his chief desire for land' represent Walpole, in the specified particulars, as definitely and unmistakably as do the 'robbing' Robin of the Grub-Street Opera and the 'Old Bob' of the Hist. Register.

it is the famous sobriquet of Walpole, the Great Man, by means of which Fielding has mostly alluded to him. But this epithet was pre-eminently associated with Walpole's public life and, therefore, I shall deal with it in the second section of this chapter. Walpole's physical appearance is considered by Fielding very cursorily. The only feature of his "short, plump ... comical figure"[1] he takes notice of is his prominent, protruding belly - which, if the vivacious Lady Mary Wortley Montagu is to be believed, carried Walpole's "presence" "At least a yard before his nose"[2] - and that too but once, in the Author's Farce, where he makes the paunchy Punch resemble Walpole not only in build but in several other particulars as well. Similarly with Walpole's landed property in Norfolk, to which our attention is drawn very casually through Robin's "little snug farm" mentioned in the Grub-Street Opera.[3] Nor does Fielding appear very eager to frown upon Walpole's hedonistic pursuits and pastimes as gravely and fixedly as some other people were doing.[4] He alludes to his fox-hunting - a weekly affair - only once,[5] and to his

1. Plumb I, 114-15.
2. 'Epistle to Lord Hervey on the King's Birthday' (Works, II, 500).
3. Works II, 110; The allusion may as well be to Richmond Park (see page 87). Another indirect allusion to Walpole's landed property is to be found in the passage referred to in note 4 of the preceding page.
4. Such as the author of The Norfolk Congress (Craftsman, Vol.III, Appendix), who gives an account of 'the Hunting, Feasting and Merry-making of Robin and his companion'.
5. Tumble-Down Dick (Works III, 441).

notorious addiction to the bottle twice,[1] and on none of these occasions does he reveal any seriously censorious intention, though it must be admitted that while describing the latter he does ascribe to Walpole some special and uncommendable motives and intentions.[2] Likewise, Walpole's utter disregard for religion and conventional ethics, which he was never ashamed of owning and exhibiting and which, consequently, got him branded as a confirmed atheist,[3] is neither pointed out by Fielding very frequently nor condemned very openly or vigorously. He makes mention of it in the Grub-Street Opera and the Modern Husband, but, whereas in the former he does not go beyond suggesting that Walpole's acceptance of the Christian dogma, his faith in the Bible and in the existence of the Devil and the Hell, can be

1. The Hist. Register and Eurydice Hiss'd (Works III, pp.374-5 and 419). In this connection, see Plumb, Men and Places, pp.147-52.

2. Quidam is so free with the bottle for two reasons. First, he knows that others, not he, will be paying for it. Secondly, he wants to render the 'Patriots' totally incapable of taking any notice either of the deplorable condition of the country or of the 'very pretty Pantomime trick' he intends to play on them. Pillage's motive is entirely different. With the help of wine he hopes to acquire, and he does acquire, that amnesic state of mind without which men like him, who know not what heroic endurance and fortitude mean, cannot escape from unpleasant memories. For him too, as for Jonathan Wild, 'bottle' is the 'true support of greatness in affliction' (Works IV, 312). While the truth of what Fielding says of Quidam in this respect cannot be denied, one doubts if Walpole ever felt the necessity of using wine for a purpose similar to Pillage's.

3. See p. 50 ; Walpole's atheism is mentioned in numerous pamphlets and political writings of the period. The most pointed allusion of this sort is to be found in an anonymous pamphlet, A Copy of the Paper drop'd in St. James's Park ...; see also Mist's Weekly Journal for May 19, 1725.

questioned,[1] in the latter, where, in a particular passage, the renunciation of religion and virtue is more definite, the applicability of that blasphemous passage to Walpole is not made equally definite and obvious.[2] Of all the censurable or ridiculous aspects of Walpole's private life, it is the disharmony prevailing between him and his wife and its probable causes and actual consequences that get most close (but by no means constant) attention of Fielding, and of that we shall talk presently.

Robert Walpole was married to Catherine Shorter, the daughter of a wealthy timber-merchant, as early as the year 1700, when he was 24 and she much younger, barely 17. It was more a marriage of convenience than of love, for it was arranged entirely by Walpole's worldly-wise father, Colonel Robert Walpole, who showed greater interest in the dowry of the girl than in her personal endowments. It was not a well-made match, but still for the first few years everything went well with both husband and wife living, thanks to the timely death of the Colonel, a life of luxury and extravagance which no earthly consideration, neither the dunning of impatient creditors nor the pressing demands of dependents, could disturb. We do not know for certain what particular event cast its shadow over their relations or the period when it happened, but the fact that after 1706 Lady Walpole bore no child for the next eleven years has made the historians

1. Works II, 78.
2. Ibid., 191.

suspect that it must have been about this time that their affection for each other began to show signs of stress and strain. That such a thing did happen we have no reason to disbelieve, for we do know that at quite an early stage Walpole and his wife had changed the pattern of their lives and adopted, not the stereotyped one of a "yawning husband and a vapourish wife" (as Squire B - would say[1]), but the one which, in the words of the observant earl, allowed them "to live together and take their pleasures their own way" [2] - the modish wife finding her pleasures in dresses, jewels, card-parties and the gallants, and the enterprising husband in the pursuit of power and pelf, vixen and doxies. Such a sensible compromise suited them well and they stuck to it till the end of their married life, though, needless to say, it did not redound to their honour. The birth of Horace in 1717 - a fortunate event for us - only served to make their respectability appear still more questionable. Henceforth, in the eyes of those who would not grant the possibility of an immaculate conception in the case of Lady Walpole, the wantonness of one and the infamy of the other became living, palpable facts.

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1. Richardson, Pamela (Everyman edition, 1960), Vol. I, 403.
2. Egmont, II, 431.

It was a spicy piece of scandal indeed at which every quill-driver of the period should have jumped. But, surprisingly, the maturer satirists, who could, as often they did, take liberties with Walpole with impunity as well as the smaller fry of Grub-Street, for whom there never was anything private enough in Walpole's private life to be spared a public exposure, preferred to keep their mouths more or less shut over it. Swift made only one attempt, and that too rather hesitatingly, to reflect on the "notorious infidelities" of Lady Walpole;[1] and so did Pope, but not until the death of the delinquent.[2] The third of this famous trio, the embittered and disappointed John Gay, while settling his score with the perfidious minister in his famous opera, painted a 'private' scene (quite a flattering one) which had very little to do with the actual facts, for in the year 1728, Lady Walpole, now well in her forties, was hardly a "dear charmer" for her husband, while he himself had for long ceased to be a centre of attraction for her.[3] It was left to Fielding, whose birth, incidentally, had coincided with the seven-year itch of the Walpoles, to accord an entirely different treatment to this episode, a treatment which though not maliciously inspired is only a bit too thorough-going and, consequently, a bit too bold-faced.

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1. Gulliver's Travels, voyage I, chapt. VI; see also A.E. Case's Four Essays on Gulliver's Travels (Princeton, 1945), p.80.
2. Epilogue to the Satires, Dialogue II l.135; on this allusion, see Prof. J.E. Butt's note in Pope's Poems, vol. IV, p.321.
3. The Beggar's Opera, Act II, Sc.13.

Fielding spares no exploitable fact or feature of Walpole's disenchanted conjugal life however despicable and unmentionable that might be. With a fancy visibly tickled by the ironical fact that the greatest pacifist of the period was unable to keep peace and harmony in his own home, he describes vividly in two plays of his, in the Author's Farce and the Mock-Doctor, how strained the relations were between husband and wife. Substituting their reciprocal indifference for a more positive and demonstrative animosity, he shows this ill-assorted pair living a cat-and-dog life in which no opportunity is lost by either of them to contrive fresh means of tormenting each other. Despite their occasional efforts to counterfeit affability, they continue to detest each other, curse the moment that saw them knit together and, in order to obtain their deliverance, wish to see each other "hang'd or drown'd".[1] Fielding does not stop at this. Casting prudence to the winds, he goes to the dangerous extent of speaking sneeringly of Walpole's cuckoldom. This he does in the Letter-Writers, where we are told that "half the great men in history are cuckolds on record",[2] in the play already referred to, the Mock-Doctor, in which Dorcas (who resembles Lady Walpole in her dislike for her husband as well as in her loose morals) is made to speak of her husband's insensibility to cuckoldom somewhat plaintively since it has rendered her pleasures less

1. The Author's Farce, Works I, p.320; see also Dorcas' eagerness to see her husband hanged (Mock-Doctor, Works II, 303), and Laetitia Wild's un-concealed non-chalance on the eve of her husband's 'shameful death' (Works IV, 321-22).

2. Works, II, p.7.

delectable to her.[1] Fielding's final and most flippant allusion to this unpleasant aspect of Walpole's conjugal life occurs in Tumble-Down Dick. There, as if to extenuate the guilt of the erring woman, he mentions the eugenic advantages obtained by a husband through his wife's prudent misconduct.[2] However, the most interesting part of Fielding's treatment of this subject lies in his light-hearted attempt to find out the primal cause of this matrimonial tug of war. Through a contemptuous allusion to Walpole's expansive waist-line (which has been noticed above) he seems to suggest that for a woman like Catherine Shorter, whose acquaintance with polite society had made her quite fastidious in her taste, it was but natural to find the company of a coarse-mannered and clownish-looking man, even though a husband, not only uncongenial but positively repulsive; just as for such a homespun person an existence with a woman who loved gay life and neglected her family obligations was nothing short of a perpetual torture. But this incompatibility, this friction and discord, springing from aesthetical and temperamental differences, Fielding appears to suggest, was a blessing in disguise - at least for the husband. It released him, so to say, from the chains of matrimony. And it also gave a new and sharper edge to his ambitions which, aided by his native stock of impudence, made it possible for him to "turn a great man".[3]

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1. Ibid., p.275.
2. Ibid. III, p.443.
3. The Author's Farce, Works, I, 326-27.

Yet another advantage incidental to Walpole's domestic troubles was his freedom to have amours of his own without being pestered by a guilty conscience or an argus-eyed wife. Though sexual passion is not believed to have been a "strong driving force in his character", it is granted by everybody that he did feel an urge, as if to vindicate his slighted masculinity, to "acquire a reputation for gallantry" by having "casual" and "unimportant" affairs with various women.[1] One of these women was Maria Skerrett, procured rather expensively through Lady Mary Montagu.[2] But with her Walpole's relations were neither casual nor unimportant. They were just the reverse. Walpole simply doted on her, but not without a reason. This shrewd girl gave him that "quiet, ease, and affection" of which an over-worked statesman like him stood in great need and which he had hitherto failed to get from any other woman, least of all from his own wife.[3] To this particular affair, and to Walpole's reputedly amorous nature, Fielding makes quite a few allusions, most of which are, however, to be found in his early plays. In the Tragedy of Tragedies, alluding to the myth of Walpole's being a prince charming,[4] he presents his hero as an extremely fortunate

1. Plumb II, 112-14.
2. Ibid., p.113n.
3. Ibid., p.113-14.
   See also Queen Caroline's observations on this affair; in particular, her satisfaction with Walpole's having found a girl for 'amusement for his leisure hours', and also her inability to comprehend 'how a man could be very fond of a woman he only got for his money', or 'how a man of Sir Robert's age and make, with his dirty mouth and great belly, could ever imagine any woman would suffer him as a lover from any consideration or inducement but his money ..." (Hervey, Memoirs, II, 421)
4. See, for example, a female correspondent's statement in a ministerial paper, The Daily Courant (for Sept. 25, 1731), regarding Walpole's popularity with the women.

person who at once is a successful fighter and a successful lover; one who overcomes more than one enemy and conquers more than one female heart, though - and this fact is very significant since it takes away all the gloss from his amorous conquests - none of the women who become enamoured of him, not even the one to whom Tom is solely devoted, happens to be very remarkable for her morals. In the Modern Husband, Fielding reflects indirectly upon Walpole's interest in the fair-sex in general through Richly, whom he presents not as a steady-going lover attached to any one particular woman, as Tom is, but as a thoroughly wicked profligate who lusts after every woman he comes across, makes his wealth a "humble servant" of his pleasures, and sells (court) favours to those who cater to his sensual desires. This, so far as it concerns Walpole, is nothing but a deliberate transformation of a moderately amorous person into a lustful satyr in support of which not much evidence can be found in the recorded events of Walpole's life. But we have only to consult the issues of the Craftsman,[1] the skits like the Fall of Mortimer and the Fortunate Prince, and the tracts like Sir Robert Brass: or, The Intrigues, Serious and Amorous, of the Knight of the Blazing Star to see how extensive and abiding Walpole's reputation as a lecherous patron of the pimps and whores was. It was undoubtedly extensive enough to be presented as a fact by the authors of the Beggars Opera, the Patron[2] and, of course, the Modern Husband.

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1. Particularly the one of January 17, 1737.
2. See above, pp. 53-54.

A greater regard for veracity is, however, shown by Fielding when he comes to describe Walpole's relations with Maria Skerrett in the Grub-Street Opera. In this extremely audacious play he has brought within the ambit of his satirical review of the events and affairs of the Court of George II all the noteworthy features of this long-lasting and mutually-rewarding liaison, excepting of course such irrelevant (but not insignificant) particulars as the birth of an illegitimate child and the "imprudent" appointment of Miss Skerrett's father on the panel of the Jury (Pulteney's "Honest Jury")[1] formed to try the tenacious publisher of the Craftsman.[2] Walpole's acquisition of Maria on the payment of what Hervey mischievously calls "entrance money",[3] his settlement of various allowances on her out of the public money, his genuine affection for her, his assumption of the Rangership of Richmond Park (on behalf of his eldest son) "in order to provide a retreat for Molly [Maria] and himself",[4]

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1. Political Ballads, pp.26-28.

2. Egmont I, 198.

3. Hervey, Memoirs, I, 86.
   What William says about Robin's mistress, Sweetissa, is as follows:
   > Your mistress - any man may have your mistress that can out-bid you, for it is very well known you never had mistress without paying for her. (Works, II, 91)

   This is almost a verbatim reproduction of Pulteney's statement in 'A Proper Reply to a Late Scurrilous Libel ...' (1731; p.4) --
   > the whole world is convinced that He [Walpole] never gain'd either Man or Woman, but as he paid for them.

   Even Anabella English, the female admirer of Walpole referred to in note 4 of page 85, while defending Walpole against the 'accuser' (Pulteney) who says that 'he could never come at women by other means than purchasing them', does not give a lie to Pulteney. She simply brings a counter-charge of debauchery against him.

4. Plumb II, 113; Hervey calls it Walpole's 'bower of bliss' (Memoirs, III, 832)

his eagerness to marry her (which he did as soon as he could) and Maria's own attachment and faithfulness to Walpole - all these interesting facts are mentioned in the Robin-Sweetissa episode of this ballad opera. After this play (which could be staged only in its original and less offensive form) Miss Skerrett makes one more appearance on Fielding's stage, and that in the Historical Register. But this time she is presented not as his mistress but as a de facto wife. Recognizing somewhat belatedly the transparency of her relations with the Screen-master General of the country, Fielding introduces her as Mrs. Screen who, like Pope's Phryne, evinces great interest in visiting the auction rooms.[1] But her motive in doing so is totally different from that of Phryne's. She goes there, according to Mr. Banter, not so much with a view to buying the "whole auction" as to make "one great auction of her own" some day, probably because, in the year 1736, she is beginning to foresee, instead of an excise, the un-doing of her present keeper, some of whose choice possessions have already been brought under the hammer.

One point that emerges from Fielding's observations on Walpole's marital and extra-marital affairs is interesting enough

1. Pope alludes to this in Epistle to Bathurst (11.121-2)
   Ask you why Phryne the whole auction buys?
   Phryne fore-sees a general Excise.
   F.W. Bateson gives the following note on these two lines:
   Warburton told Spence ... that Phryne was 'Miss Skirret' [sic] . This is very probable ... according to the Duchess of Marlborough ... Maria was a constant patron of the auction-rooms ... (Pope, Poems, III, ii,p.101)

to be mentioned separately. It is, to put it precisely, that Walpole in his dual capacity as a husband and a lover represented two entirely different beings. All the allusions to his relations with his wife - his coolness towards her, his granting full freedom to her to live as reckless a life as she chose to, his refusal to feel injured by her wayward conduct - indicate that in Fielding's opinion Robert Walpole was not sufficiently jealous of his and his family's honour. If we add to these the allusions to his own attempts at seducing other people's wives, we get the impression that for him the institution of marriage itself had neither any significance nor any sanctity. In any case he did not regard the breaking of the marriage vow (by either party) an offence serious enough to call for any action. But, as a lover, so Fielding suggests, he was jealousy itself. There he would brook no rival. The slightest suspicion that some one had dared to make addresses to his mistress would set him foaming at the mouth and compel him to seek satisfaction for this unpardonable affront to his honour in the way prescribed by tradition. It is of course impossible to offer any concrete instance in support of the latter part of the assessment made by Fielding. With the exception of Fielding, no other writer of the period, not even the most cantankerous critic or lampoonist of Walpole, has, to my knowledge, endowed him (Walpole) with a pair of green eyes. But about the former, there can be little doubt. Apart from his passive endurance of his wife's

unfaithfulness, there are several authentic reports from his closest friends from which we can easily gather how cynically indifferent to and unappreciative of the delicacy of the conjugal ties Walpole actually was.[1]

B. Allusions to Walpole's Public Life

The air of flippancy and jocularity that one finds in Fielding's allusions to Walpole's personal and private affairs disappears almost totally when one comes to consider his observations on Walpole's public life. These observations - which, as already seen, are not wholly confined to Fielding's recognized 'political' plays - have, instead, a seriousness of purpose and,occasionally, a touch of righteous indignation and constitute, when taken together, a most candid and comprehensive (though not indiscriminate) attack on Walpole's statesmanship, or, to use Fielding's own phrase, his "prime-ministring".[2] Every reprehensible aspect (from a moralist's point of view) of Walpole's unparalleled political power is taken into account. Fielding has ignored neither the basis on which it was founded, nor the means through which it was retained for such a long period, nor

1. In this connection, see Hervey's conjectural remarks (II, 740-2) on Walpole's likely reaction to the question of the suspected legitimacy of the only child of his eldest son, Robert, and Lady Mary Montagu's reference (Letters I, 499) to his joking with his fourteen-year old daughter-in-law, the wife of the said Robert, about Lord Stair's attempts to seduce her.

2. Joseph Andrews (II,i; Works, V, 103).

the ends (which were mostly personal) it was made to serve. Hence it is that one finds his plays littered with sarcastic allusions to the 'Great Man', to his administrative methods and to those policies and measures of his which were generally believed to be running counter to the interest of the country and its people but (some of them) extremely advantageous to him (Walpole) personally. It is these three categories of allusions that I propose to discuss here together with the ones concerning Walpole's attitude towards the people. Fielding's anticipatory allusions to Walpole's removal from public life, his downfall, will be discussed at the end of this section.

a. Walpole: the Great Man

> The Great Man is an Expression, which hath undoubtedly occasion'd more sneers than this Nation hath seen in a Century before.

Thus says Caleb D'Anvers in The Craftsman of 19 September 1730.[1] Fielding has employed this universally understood and satirically useful epithet in eleven plays to allude to Walpole. Perhaps the most innocent employment of it, which probably did not occasion any sneer, is made in the very first play of his,

1. Caleb dedicated the second volume of the Craftsman 'To a Certain Great Man', that is, Walpole. This phrase, with all its abominable connotations, was used by the earlier Whig writers for Louis XIV (according to one of them, Steele, Cain was the first great man of this sort). But in 1720's and 30's it was exclusively applied to Walpole (Plumb, Walpole, I, 335n; J.E. Wells, 'Fielding's Political Purpose in Jonathan Wild', PMLA, XXVIII [1913], 1-55).

Love in Several Masques, where we find Sir Positive Trap expressing one of his most positive opinions: that "no one can be a great man unless his father had been so before him".[1] There is no sting in this remark, primarily because it is made by one whose obsession with pedigree Fielding has ridiculed throughout the play. But it does, when considered along with the apprehension expressed in the Tragedy of Tragedies that Tom Thumb despite his "littleness" might be made a "great man",[2] place Walpole in Maria's third category of "great" men, that is, of the men who are neither born great nor achieve greatness but who still find (or see to it) that un-merited greatness is thrust upon them. The Tragedy of Tragedies, as seen earlier, contains a sustained ridicule on Walpole's 'greatness', but the allusions to the great man become more pointed and explicit with a play that was offered as an after-piece to the Tragedy of Tragedies. From the Letter-Writers onward Fielding rarely misses any opportunity for exposing or condemning those vicious aspects of Walpole's greatness about the actuality of which he had the authority and the assurance of the best (as well as the worst) writers of the day. Accordingly, we find him speaking ironically of a great man's infatuation for power and abuse of power;[3] of his acquisition of wealth through means so dishonourable that he is exposed to the

1. Works, I, 158.
2. Ibid., 472.
3. The Author's Farce (1. iii; Works, I, 288).

lasting ridicule of the people;[1] of his application of that wealth to purposes so transparent in themselves that no recipient of it ever feels the necessity of asking his motives;[2] of his self-conceit which makes him compare himself with men like Wolsey and keeps him foolishly heedless not only of the sober advice of his well-wishers but also of the voice of the people;[3] of his vanity which is satisfied by the crowds of cap-in-hand supplicants and cringing, mealy-mouthed sycophants.[4] Fielding mentions as well the principle which the great man follows in bestowing his favours. It is the simple one of 'give and take'. One who aspires for them must be capable of and willing to make a return; that is to say, he (or she) must serve his various interests one way or another. Because of this principle, the great man remains cold towards men of great merit, virtue and past national services and condescending and obliging only to pimps, whores, and such other despicable creatures.[5]

What are the factors that go into the making of such a great man? Or, to put it otherwise, what exactly were the qualifications by acquiring which Walpole came to be styled a Great Man? This is not an impertinent question and Fielding, like a leader-writer in

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1. The Historical Register (III, i; Works, III, 370).
2. Lottery (Air XV; Works, II, 149).
3. Eurydice Hiss'd (Works, III, 408, 412-14).
4. The Modern Husband (I, viii and V, vi; Works, II, 177-78, 244).
5. Besides the preceding references, see the following - Letter-Writers (I, iii; Works, II, 8), Eurydice Hiss'd (Works, III, 409-11), Tumble-Down Dick (Works, III, 446).

the Craftsman (probably Swift), does not leave it unanswered, though what he says in this respect is somewhat different from that writer's answer.[1] For the sort of greatness attained by Walpole, Fielding says quite bluntly, one need not have any "qualification whatsoever".[2] Wisdom, virtue, honour, patriotic disposition - the essential components of true greatness - have nothing to do with this spurious brand of greatness.[3] The surest and quickest way of becoming a great man is, of course, through wealth because it is accepted on all hands that "when you cry he is Rich, you cry a Great Man".[4] But, possession of wealth is by no means an indispensable pre-condition. Since cupidity and rapacity are the most distinctive and lasting characteristics of a great man,[5] opulence can as well be the consequence of one's greatness as its cause. However, there are two things, Fielding suggests rather impishly, which can be instrumental (as they have been in one particular case) in turning a person of mean capabilities, humble origin and no fortune into a Great Man, and they are the following: having a fair amount of impudence and

1. The Craftsman, No.9 (2 January 1727). According to this writer as well no special qualification or talent is needed for it; one can become a great man by pimping (for the king), by bribing the royal mistresses, and by making his own faction.
2. Author's Farce (III, i; Works, I, 327)
3. Ibid., (329-330).
4. Ibid.
5. Historical Register (III, i; Works, III, 370).

being wedded to a nagging, gadding, irascible and, better still (for "half the great men in history are cuckolds on record"), an adulterous woman.[1]

Before we finish with Fielding's innuendoes upon Walpole the Great Man, one point has to be made clear. And it is that in the plays Fielding rarely indulges in the then current fad for equating the 'great man' with a great rogue. No doubt he was convinced of the appropriateness of the comparison. The character of Lord Richly (in Modern Husband), who is a great man as well as a great rogue, and some stray remarks on the conspiracy of the great to rob the poor, and on their being above law though their crimes are as heinous as, if not worse than those

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1. Works, I, 319-20 and 326-27; Works, II, 7.
About Walpole's exceptional impudence which was recognized by his friends and foes alike, see the following:
i. Lady Mary Montagu's advice to her husband to emulate Walpole and Lord Halifax, both of whom had gained 'quick advancement' mainly because of their being 'remarkably impudent' (Works, I, 215).
ii. Edward Young's panegyric on Walpole, the Instalment (1726) in which he says 'True Greatness lies in daring to be Great' - which is exactly what Fielding's Punch intends to do.
iii. A Copy of the Paper drop'd in St. James's Park (1729) which begins thus:
> Whereas a Coachman, who for his unparalleled and consumate Impudence has, for many years past, gone by the name of 'Brazen-Face' ...
iv. Pulteney's A Proper Reply ... (1731) which describes Walpole as 'a Person of tolerable second-rate Parts; below a Genius; above the Vulgar; of Industry inferior to few; of Impudence superior to all Men ...'
It is to be noted that this distinctive trait is present in most of the characters who are made to impersonate Walpole; such as in Marplay Senior, who leaves his 'Corinthian brass' as a legacy to his son (Works, I, 303; for Walpole and Cibber's being 'Corinthian both' see Fog's Journal for 1.3.1729); in Punch, the 'impudent rogue' (Works, I, 327); in Pistol, who finds encouragement in the 'great applause' - that is, the hisses-of the town (Works, III, 365), and in Quidam, the 'pure impudent rogue', who 'can stand the hisses of them [audience] all' (Works, III, 372).

of the poor transgressors,[1] amply show that Fielding had been sufficiently indoctrinated by Mist's Journal (later it became Fog's) and John Gay in this respect. But he does not make any extensive, direct and exclusive application of this doctrine to Walpole. In any case, one nowhere gets - not even in the Modern Husband - that ruthless exposure of the aims and ambitions, precepts and practices of a scheming, designing, treacherous and egoistically disposed 'great man' which Fielding later presented in Jonathan Wild the Great. Nor does one find here the line of demarcation between true and false greatness drawn as distinctly as in the Preface to the Miscellanies and the two poems published therein, Of True Greatness and Of Good Nature. The burden of most of the allusions to the 'great man' in the plays is not so much his inherent villainy as his innate "littleness" or "meanness" and that, we have to remember, Fielding always regarded as something which invited ridicule but little else besides.[2]

b. Walpole's Administrative Methods

The expedients and stratagems that Walpole had adopted or evolved to keep himself firmly in the saddle are, not unexpectedly, the most prominent butt of Fielding's satire. With a view to holding them up to utmost ridicule, he employs the conventional

1. Mock-Doctor (Works, II, 290), Coffee-House Politicians (Works, I, 376), Grub-Street Opera (Works, II, 94).
2. For these references, see above, page 34.

and popular techniques of the contemporary writers and compares them, in their diverse aspects, with the trivial artifices of a fiddler, the shallow antics of a harlequin, and the short-sighted managerial policies of a theatre despot. The word "fiddler" (or just "fiddle"), the Baconian interpretation of which was found specially suitable for Walpole by one of his critics,[1] Fielding uses on three occasions to reflect not only on his bustling about

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1. In Fog's Weekly Journal for May 9, 1730. A part of the passage quoted from Bacon's comments on Themistocles' claim that 'he cou'd not fiddle, tho' he could make a small Town a large city' - in the light of which Bacon divides the statesmen into two categories, separating those who act like Themistocles from those'who can [only]fiddle very cunningly' - runs as follows:
   > and certainly those little degenerate Arts and Shifts, whereby many Governours and Counsellors of Princes have endeavoured to gain favour with their Masters, Estimation with some Faction, and by which they have attempted to blind and deceive the Common People, are only Things to amuse for a little Time, but of no use to the State ...

   Fog, turning this 'ingenious observation' to its account, proceeds to make it specially applicable to Walpole:
   > a Fidler [sic] is he who is always very busy, and yet never does anything; he makes great Bustle about every Trifle, and trifles in the most important Affairs; if such a Man be a Minister of State, and a Rumour of War reaches his Ears, he immediately falls a fiddling, that is, he puts Armies and Fleets in Motion, without giving himself a Thought for what Purpose or Design; if Peace be the Business in Hand, he fiddles again, that is, he runs about, to treat here and negotiate there, without anything in his Head but Crochets ...

   Walpole's association with 'fiddle' was an established fact. Samuel Johnson's Hurlothrumbo, which enjoyed Walpole's protection for a time, was banned when it was discovered that the character of Lord Flame, a dextrous fiddler, was meant 'as a Satyr [sic] upon anybody', that is, upon Walpole himself (Fog's Journal, 28.8.1731). In the spurious 'Apology'for Theophilus Cibber's life one finds Walpole described as 'the Fiddle of the Nation' and'another Orpheus, who can make these old Lions [Patriots] move to the Tune he plays ...' (1740, 27-28), which is exactly the same as what Quidam the fiddler does in the Hist. Register.

"every Trifle" and trifling "in the most important Affairs", as that critic does, but also to allude more explicitly to the hollowness of his policies and promises[1] as well as to his practice of diverting the attention of the people, for personal reasons, from the vital issues of the day.[2] Similarly, taking a leaf out of the Craftsman,[3] he identifies Walpole with Harlequin in the following respects: in his dexterity in cheating the people with his cheap political stunts, in his knack for affecting different (that is, contradictory) and deceptive attitudes and principles (which leave everyone guessing at his next move), and in his ability to make others assume shapes and postures of his liking. The last mentioned skill Walpole is made to demonstrate rather crudely in Tumble-Down Dick, but quite adroitly in the Historical Register, where, transcending "the fourberies" of the great Lun, he transforms the grumbling Patriots into obliged and obliging retainers at no personal cost. Far more important than these parallels is the one which Fielding draws between the Prime Ministers of theatrical and political states since through it he has managed to assail a much wider range of Walpole's administrative policies and methods. He employs this parallel - a common-place in the contemporary literature, but rarely applied so elaborately as by Fielding - in the Author's Farce, Tumble-Down Dick, the Historical Register, and Eurydice Hiss'd, comparing

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1. The Author's Farce (Works, I, 333).
2. Historical Register (III,i; Works, III, 374-5).
3. See above, page 61.

Walpole by turns with the real and fictitious theatre magnates like Colley Cibber (Marplay of the Author's Farce and Ground-Ivy of the Historical Register), Theophilus Cibber (Pistol of the Hist. Register), John Rich (Harlequin of Tumble-Down Dick), the Bastard of Appollo (Hist. Register) and Pillage (Eurydice Hiss'd), to show that Walpole's tricks of the trade and his aims and objects were in no way different from theirs; that he, violating the constitution of the country, had emulated the despotic managers and made the whole business of running the government a one-man affair. Fielding's views regarding the appropriateness of this analogy are presented nowhere so precisely as in a speech of Mr. Medley in the Historical Register. Reminding Mr. Sourwit of his earlier observation - that "when my politics come to a farce, they very naturally lead me to the play-house"[1] - Medley re-affirms that there is a "strict resemblance between the states political and theatrical" and proceeds to describe the particulars in which that resemblance is to be found. Mr. Medley says:

> there is a ministry in the latter [theatrical state] as well as the former [political state]; and I believe as weak a ministry as any poor kingdom could ever boast of; parts are given in the latter to actors, with much the same regard to capacity, as places in the former have sometimes been ... and though the public damn both, yet while they both receive their pay, they laugh at the public behind the

1. Works, III, 346.

> scenes; and if one considers the plays that come from one part, and the writings from the other, one would be apt to think the same authors were retained in both.[1]

As this passage shows, Fielding found Walpole comparable with a theatre-manager in three respects: first, in his abuse of the Court patronage; second, in his covetousness revealed by his ingenious but unpopular fiscal measures: and lastly, in his contemptuous disregard of public opinion. Of these alleged short-comings of Walpole, I shall consider here only Fielding's allusions to Walpole's patronage system, the key-stone of his administrative set-up.

i. Walpole's Patronage System

> Walpole [once in office] set out to engross the entire field of patronage, to guard it jealously, and to make it yield a solid core of support in the Commons and victories at the elections. His view of office had always been realistic. In 1715, when he became Paymaster-General and Governor of Chelsea, he had purged every office that he controlled and placed his friends and dependants in them ... In 1721 he swept the Treasury clean as he could and installed his clients wherever possible. No office was too humble ... No relative went unnoticed. ... Ruthlessly and efficiently he placed his friends' relatives and dependants once he had secured his own.... The juiciest plums went to

1. Ibid., 363-64.

> his own relatives and dependants; offices were showered on his brothers and cousins; on his Norfolk friends; on his bankers, solicitors and agents. Then came the hordes of dependants of his close and loyal allies. The leavings were measured out amongst peers and members of Parliament in return for effective support in their respective houses.[1]

This is what a recent biographer of Walpole, J.H. Plumb, has to say about his monopolization of every form of Court-patronage. Plumb, and virtually every single writer dealing with the politics of that period have found a justification for this act of Walpole in the fact that, the political loyalties being as fickle and uncertain as they were in the earlier decades of the eighteenth century, the only way a minister could both secure his position and form a stable government was by gaining a firm and exclusive control over the disposal of pensions and places. Surely, there was nothing unusual or even unreasonable in this. To seek loyal supporters with the help of court favours, to shower sinecures on one's kith and kin, and to make the government machinery subserve one's private interests, were vices known to other statesmen besides Walpole.[2] His fault, rather crime, lay in the choice of

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1. Plumb II, 92-3, 100; See also the same author's Men and Places (pp.135-45), F.S. Oliver's The Endless Adventure (vol.I, 279-80); Egmont (vol.I, 19, 85-86, 96, 406-9; vol.II, 247-8, 508; vol.III, 24).

2. Lord Chesterfield, however, feels that the difference, in this respect, between Walpole and other statesmen was enormous. In his character-sketch of Walpole (Letters [1892], vol.III, p.1417) he says:
   Money, not pre-rogative, was the chief engine of his administration; and he employed it with a success which in

the favourites. Regardless of how adversely the administrative efficiency might be affected, he had, purely out of self-interest, made it a matter of policy that the places requiring highest degree of intelligence, competence, experience and integrity should go to persons who, being sadly wanting in these qualities, had neither any capacity to shine nor any chance to stand in his light. For this, he fully deserved to be condemned and it is rather gratifying to find that amongst the critics of this particular aspect of Walpole's state-craft one can list the names not only of the biased opponents of his and of the unbiased historians of later years, but also of his son, Horace, and his under-strapper, John Hervey, who in one of the most memorable passages of his Memoirs makes this candid observation:

> ... as he [Walpole] was unwilling to employ anybody under him, or let anybody approach the King and the Queen who had any understanding, lest they should employ it against him, so, from fear of having dangerous friends, he never had any useful ones, every one of his subalterns being as

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a manner disgraced humanity. He was not, it is true, the inventor of that shameful method of governing ... but with uncommon skill and unbounded profusion he brought it to that perfection, which at this time dishonours and distresses this country ...
Horace Walpole seems to endorse Chesterfield's views when he says 'Mr. Pelham would never have wet his finger [in corrupting members of Parliament] if Sir Robert Walpole had not dipped upto the elbow'. (Memoirs [1846], I, p.234)

incapable of defending him as they were of attacking him, and no better able to support than to undermine him.[1]

The sum and substance of Fielding's comments on Walpole's patronage system are virtually the same as those of other critics, namely, that favours are shown to those who least deserve them. Finding a reasonable excuse not so much in his own disappointments (if any) as in the dismissals of such distinguished and hard-to-replace personages as Chesterfield, Cobham and Pitt,[2] he lashes out in one play after another at Walpole's "hand to mouth sagacity"[3] in appointing his incompetent creatures to important administrative and diplomatic places. In the Historical Register and Eurydice Hiss'd - to take those plays first where Fielding employs the State-Stage parallel for this purpose - he provides ample illustrations in support of Medley's imputative declaration that "parts are given in the latter [theatrical state] to actors, with much the same regard to capacity, as places in the former [political state]".[4] In the first of these two politically

1. Hervey I, 295; see also his comments on the 'ciphers of the cabinet' on page 470 of the 2nd volume. Horace's criticism is substantially the same as Hervey's (see H. Walpole's Memoirs vol.I, 231). Further information on what Pope calls Walpole's 'Tools', his 'toothless saws' and leaden 'Hatchets' (Poems, IV, p.321) can be had, apart from the writings of the Opposition journalists, from Whitehead's State-Dunces, Plumb (II, 281-2, 329) and Oliver (I, 156, III, 37).
2. Cobham and Chesterfield were removed from their places immediately after the Excise crisis; Pitt lost his in 1736.
3. Oliver, F.S., The Endless Adventure, III, p.37.
4. Historical Register (II,i; Works III, 363-64).

inspired plays he ridicules Walpole's strange criteria for judging one's eligibility by speaking of it as the most astounding discovery of the time, a discovery which though not beneficial to the people, still leaves "all the discoveries of every philosopher or mathematician from the beginning of the world to this day" far behind, since it has established

> that a man of great parts, learning, and virtue, is fit for no employment whatever; that an estate renders a man unfit to be trusted; that being a blockhead is a qualification for business; that honesty is the only sort of folly for which a man ought to be neglected and contemned.[1]

The bastard of Apollo (that is, the patron of the dunces) is the "inventor" of this discovery and his inveterate belief in its soundness and workability is revealed to us when he comes to allot the parts of the Lords, warriors and ambassadors, ostensibly in a play, to persons who, though in no way qualified for them, meet his requirements fully. All that he wants in them or from them is no more than that the Lords should be able to "mind their cues" (that is, speak only when bidden to), the warrior need not know anything even about fencing (since he "will have no occasion to fight") but should be able to "look fierce, and speak well" in the house, and that the ambassador should have "a little drollery" in him.[2] The identity of the bastard is obvious, and so is that of

1. Ibid., p.366.

2. Ibid., pp.367-68. See also p.350 for Medley's observation on the 'politicians', the 'ablest heads in the Kingdom'.

Pillage, the conceited theatre-manager and farce-writer of the other play, Eurydice Hiss'd, who, like Walpole, shows greater interest in having his claquers inside the House than admirers outside, and who, again like Walpole, foolishly believes that the want of worth in his supporters can easily be compensated by an increase in their number.[1] It is this belief that makes him hire more and more "actors" (though he already has more than he needs) and raise his "prices on the town" higher and still higher, but without showing any corresponding improvement in the standard of his performances. But Pillage, who as the patron of the undeserving represents Walpole as much as the bastard does, differs from the latter in one particular - and this difference is very significant as through it Fielding gives a new reason for Walpole's administration being so conspicuously shorn of capable men. Pillage unlike the bastard is not averse to having talented and honest men with him. On the contrary, knowing the propaganda value of being supported by such men, he goes all out, employing all the persuasive arguments and means at his command, to win them over to his side. In fact it is they, these men of sound integrity and spotless character, who believe in the sanctity and

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1. Walpole's uncommendable practice of 'trading ... for numbers' and defending 'his errors by a majority' is admitted by his son as well (Memoirs, I, 231-32). It is to be borne in mind that according to Fielding's Jonathan Wild, the greatness of a man, whether a prig or a prime-minister, is determined by the number of his 'tools' (Works, IV, 154-55).

supremacy of "the laws" and independence of judgment, that refuse to give him, since he persists in flouting the public opinion, their unqualified support and thus leave him no option but to fall back upon those whom his money and favours can buy.[1] This much is admitted by Pillage himself when, soliloquizing on his interview with Honestus, he says:

> I wish I could have gain'd one honest man
> Sure to my side - But since the attempt is vain,
> Numbers must serve for worth; the vessel sails
> With equal rapid fury and success,
> Borne by the foulest tide, as clearest stream.[2]

Reflections on Walpole's preference of the unworthy over capable men are cast elsewhere too, such as in William's statement in the Grub-Street Opera that as long as Robin retains his position and influence "No merit must e'er / Expect to find any reward"; in Captain Merit's complaint in the Modern Husband that he with all his past record of service is left to starve and shiver in the cold while "every painted butterfly wantons in the sunshine", because in the prevailing state of affairs "pimping and whoring are esteemed public service" but campaigning and

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1. Works, III, 412-14.
2. Ibid., 414. The imagery of the last two lines seems to be a perfect burlesque of the one presented by Edward Young in The Instalment (1726) where, alluding to Walpole's being made a Knight of Garter, he addresses his country thus:
   See, Britain, see thy Walpole shine from far,
   His azure Ribbon, and his radiant Star;
   A Star that, with auspicious beams, shall guide
   Thy vessel safe, thro' Fortune's roughest tyde.

fighting for the country are not; and in the prophetic words of Queen Common Sense in Pasquin that after her demise "Places requiring learning and great parts" will be "drawn by men deficient in them both".[1] All honours, we are told on another occasion, are sold to the highest bidder;[2] or conferred upon those who render private service. Hence it is that, besides the pimps and whores, the wretched scribblers "who for hire / Would write away their country's liberties",[3] thrive and the fools and knaves, simply because they are wealthy, are allowed to "Transcend the wise and the brave".[4]

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1. Works, vol.II, p.92, 97 and 177; vol.III, p.326.
2. Works, vol.II, p.290. See also the Historical Register (Works, vol.III, p.362) and An Interlude between Jupiter, Juno ... (vol. VIII, p.67) for allusions to a shop ('minister's shop') selling court-favours, honours and ribbons. A charge of similar nature is made against Walpole by Pulteney in An Answer to one Part of a Late Infamous Libel (1731, p.43).
3. Works, III, p.415. Among Walpole's scribblers Fielding includes both Theophilus Cibber and John Rich. This is deducible from his statement, made through Medley in the Hist. Register, that the same authors were writing for the political state as for the theatrical, and from the bracketing together of the wits of "Mr. Hugh Pantomime" (John Rich) and "William Goosequill" (William Arnall) in the auction scene of the same play. (See below, page 109 and note 1 of p.110, for some more information about Theophilus Cibber). Fielding hits out at the ministerial writers again in An Interlude (vol. VIII, p.67), and Of True Greatness (Works, XI, p.107). For other hits, by other hands, directed against the same group of people, see The Dunciad II, ll.305-322 (Pope, Poems, V. pp.311-312), Verres and His Scribblers, The State-Dunces, and, of course, the issues of the Craftsman, Common Sense and The Champion.
4. Works, II, 290.

Some of these worthless, witless persons, to whom alone Walpole's favours are available, are brought on the stage to strut and prate and reveal their inherent stupidity. The Orator of the Author's Farce who delivers several absurd orations from his "tub"; Noodle and Doodle of the Tragedy of Tragedies, who as courtiers in place have apparently no task to perform except that of lavishing encomiums on their patron;[1] John of the Grub-Street Opera, who being Robin's "best of friends" is always ready to do any dirty work for him even if it means dereliction of his own duties;[2] the courtier-friends of Richly in the Modern Husband and the courtiers of the Intriguing Chambermaid and Pasquin; the blundering "Politicians", the bastard of Apollo's "actors" and willing-to-be-seduced "Patriots" of the Historical Register, and the hired supporters of Pillage in Eurydice Hiss'd - all these characters are caricatures of the people belonging to Walpole's coterie and at least two of them are definitely identifiable: the Orator, who is of course John Henley whom Walpole had engaged to defend him and his policies in his paper, The Hyp-Doctor,[3] and the faithful John, who is none other

1. That their efforts produce just the opposite effect is, however, realized neither by them nor by their patron. Our attention to this ironical fact is drawn again, by another writer, in the Dedication of The Sly Subscription: or the Norfolk Minister (1733, p.iv).

2. The accuracy of Fielding's assessment of the nature of the work (whetting Robin's knives, cleaning his spoons and glasses) assigned to Hervey by Walpole is borne out by Hervey himself when he complains that the latter found him 'fit for nothing but to carry candles and set chairs' (Hervey, Memoirs, III, 922).

3. Henley got £100 p.a. for this job; he appears again - as Mr. Hen - in the Historical Register. An indirect allusion to Henley's 'tub' is to be found in The Temple Beau (Works, I, 240).

than John Hervey, the "chief eunuch" (appointed by Walpole) of the palace of St. James's.[1] It is possible to make some guess about a few others as well. For example, the "4th actor" in Eurydice Hiss'd, who speaks northern dialect, gets money from Pillage, and promises to "bring the huse down" represents, in all probability, the whole lot of the sixteen Scottish Peers whom Walpole had got elected (in his usual way) in the 1734 elections[2] -- just as the parson (Puzzletext) in the Grub-Street Opera does, in certain respects, the entire bench of the Bishops in the Lords. Similarly, the "Poet" in the same play (Eurydice Hiss'd), who is "always proud" to serve Pillage, and the "handsome, genteel, young fellow" for whom the "poet" seeks Pillage's patronage (Pillage is already aware of the young man's great abilities and is quite confident that the 'town', too, will appreciate them), one can safely suggest, were meant to represent the Cibbers: the father Colley, and the enterprising son, Theophilus, who, according to the contemporary gossip, had recently re-inforced the

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1. R. Sedgwick, Hervey's Memoirs, I, p.L. John Hervey is again ridiculed by Fielding in Pasquin; the 'Fan' incident (Works, III, p.290) was meant to allude to his feminine nickname, Fanny, which Pope had first bestowed on him in A Master Key to Popery (See Prof. J.E. Butt's article in Pope and His Contemporaries [1949], pp.41-57) and, later, in Imitations of Horace (Pope, Poems, IV, p.5). Fielding dedicated his Shamela to 'Miss Fanny'; for this ironical dedication and for Fielding's attacks on Hervey in Joseph Andrews, see Martin Battestin, 'Lord Hervey's Role in Joseph Andrews', PQ XLII [1963], 226-40.
2. For the details of this controversial election, see Cobbet, vol. IX, 719 et seq.

battered ranks of the Gazetteers.[1] In addition to these creatures of Walpole whom we see in flesh and blood there are a few others who are just named or alluded to by Fielding. To this category belong Samuel Johnson, the fortunate, well-patronized author of Hurlothrumbo mentioned in the Author's Farce and, probably, in the Modern Husband,[2] Horace Walpole, the fat-gutted, over-indulged brother of Robin in the Grub-Street Opera,[3] the ministerial writers, James Pitt and William Arnall ("Mrs. Osborne" of Pasquin and "William Goosequill" of the Historical Register, respectively),[4] and Colley Cibber, the "blundering laureate" of Eurydice Hiss'd, who for the political satirists, including Fielding, was not only one of Walpole's favourites but a useful substitute for him as well.[5]

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1. See, in particular, A Dialogue which Lately pass'd between the Knight and his Man John in which the 'Knight' (Walpole) accepts, since Pope has refused to serve him, his 'Man', John Hervey's, recommendation regarding Cibber's son, and the 'Apology for the Life of Mr. T..... C..... Comedian [1740].
2. See page 30 note 3 and page 50 note 2 . According to Dibdin (vol. V, 5, p.77) Walpole had encouraged popular 'infatuation' for Johnson's play 'to amuse the people while some state secrets were getting properly ripe for discovery'. A similar account is to be found in Baker's Biographia Dramatica (Vol.II, 403).
3. Works, vol. II, 90.
4. Ibid., vol. III, pp.289 and 361.
5. Cibber belongs to both the categories. He appears in person as Mr. Marplay (later Marplay Senior) and Sir Farcical Comic in the Author's Farce, as Ground-Ivy in the Historical Register, and as the anonymous 'Poet' in Eurydice Hiss'd (see above, p.109) Sarcastic allusions to his poet-laureateship (hence to his being a protege of Walpole) are made in the Author's Farce (Works, vol.I, p.321), Pasquin (Works, vol.III, p.282) and in the phrase quoted above from Eurydice Hiss'd (Works III, p.413).

Such unprincipled, unconscionable, venal supporters whose allegiance is bought and not freely obtained cannot be very dependable in crucial moments. So long as one's star is in the ascendant and no occasion arises to test their loyalty, they are all devotion and all submission. But the moment they come to suspect that the wind is turning against their benefactor they follow their interest and, without any scruple, discard him. This wholesome moral is Fielding's last word (so far as his plays are concerned) on Walpole's patronage system and it is offered, for his benefit, through the eye-opening experiences of his Pillage, who, once he is forsaken by fortune, becomes instantaneously "the scorn of his admirers, and [is] deserted and abandoned by all those who [had] courted his favour, and appear'd the foremost to uphold and protect him".[1] That such a piece of advice was worth listening to, Walpole was to realize five years later when his most trusted friends began to behave exactly in the manner foretold by Fielding.[2]

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1. Works, III, 408.
2. See Hervey, Memoirs (I, 174-5; II, 653-4; III, 701, 830); Egmont, (III, 28, 141); Horace Walpole, Reminiscences (1924), 96 and Memoirs (1846) I, 85; Owen, Rise of Pelhams (1957), 11-15, 22-27. For Hervey's own flirtations with Walpole's opponents, see Sedgwick's introduction to his Memoirs (Lii), and the 'Motion' print.

ii. Walpole's Subordination of the Houses of Lords and Commons.

The object uppermost in Walpole's mind ever since he had assumed the reins of office was to keep the two Houses of Parliament constantly under his thumb, because, without that, he knew full well no administration could either last for long or work very effectively. It was mainly for this reason that he had engrossed the Court patronage, believing that solid rewards in the shape of pensions and places given discreetly to members who commanded some influence in either of the Houses would get for him not just a working majority but an overwhelming majority. The numerous attempts of the Opposition members to put a curb on the number of the placemen in the Parliament[1] as well as the big differences in the votes cast for and against the ministry during Walpole's tenure give a measure of the tremendous success achieved by him in this respect.[2] But, apart from pensions and places, Walpole had employed other tactics as well

1. Between February 1730 and February 1733 the Bill 'to prevent Pensioners from sitting in the House of Commons' was introduced four times; on each occasion Walpole allowed it to be passed by the Commons but got it rejected by the Lords. Those who spoke in support of the bill dwelt mainly on one important point: that the very presence in the House of so vast a number of pensioners and place-holders, who being in the fee of the Crown had to be attentive to the hand that fed them, disturbed seriously the balance which the Glorious Revolution of 1688 had established between the Crown, the Lords and the Commons. (See Cobbet, vols. VIII and IX, columns 789-97, 841-54, 882, 942, 989, 992, 1177 and 1200).

2. Hervey describes only two occasions when the Government could not secure a majority in the Commons. (Memoirs I, 197-9; II, 417-19).

for controlling the Parliament. For example, he had used Queen Caroline's great influence with the Lords Spiritual to make them subservient to his will, and, in other cases, where seats were reserved neither for the holders of places in the Court nor for the reverend incumbents of the sees, he had taken other steps to get his nominees returned to parliament - preferably by the electorate itself, if not, by other agencies.[1] Bothering not in the least about the nature of the means resorted to, he hardly ever lost any chance or excuse for swelling the number of his henchmen in the Parliament.

To these malpractices of Walpole, to the fact that he had, to a very great extent, debased and debilitated and even subjugated the Houses of Lords and Commons by glutting them with his servile nonentities, Fielding draws his readers' attention time and again. In Pasquin he describes how by bribing the mayors, the aldermen and the voters, or by getting the election results rigged by the returning officers, or, failing all this, merely by filing an election petition the ministerial candidates got themselves 'elected' to Parliament to have the privilege of saying "aye and no" (their ability to say so being the only qualification they are supposed to have)[2] as and when required by

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1. Philip Yorke, the second Earl of Hardwicke, points out that Walpole was 'not sufficiently delicate about the decisions of Elections' (Walpoliana, [1783], p.9). See also Hervey I, 76.

2. Pasquin (I,i; Works,III, 274).
   See Tom Virtuoso's announcement in the Craftsman of 13 September 1729 regarding the sale of his collection which includes
   'Above two hundred fine talking Parrots ... They all say YES or NO, as their Master bids them, upon the least Nod or Wink of the Eye ...'

their chief prompter. The same fact is presented somewhat more pointedly and emphatically in the Historical Register and Eurydice Hiss'd, where we find the bastard of Apollo and Prompter, passing comments on "a parcel of [insignificant] English Lords",[1] Ground-Ivy talking of the not uncommon practice of carrying things "in the house against the voice of the people",[2] and Pillage recruiting new "actors" so that by the sheer number of his retinue he may frighten into silence every dissenting voice in the house.[3] The alliance - unholy, in the eyes of the Opposition - that had sprung up between Walpole and the Bench of Bishops in the House of Lords (from which occasional misunderstandings and bickerings could not be totally excluded despite the best efforts of the Queen), is ridiculed in the demanding friendship of Puzzletext with Robin in the Grub-Street Opera, and again, a bit covertly, in the allusion to the "very clear conscience" of a bishop (and a judge)[4] that has been in the

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1. Works, III, 367.
2. Ibid., 370.
3. Ibid., 412.
   The bastard of Apollo's need for an 'actor' who can 'look fierce, and speak well' carries yet another insinuation on Walpole's alleged attempts at intimidating the members of Parliament.
4. See the Craftsman of 27.1.1727, 28.3.1730, 1.9.1733; Tit for Tat (1734) line 81 on the Bishops 'pawning votes and souls'; and Sedition and Deformation Display'd (1731, pp.30-32) on the Opposition's irritation over the 'uniform Tenor' of the actions of 'the Bishops and Judges' in the House of Lords.

keeping of Peter Humdrum Esq., (that is, Walpole), in the auction scene of the Historical Register.[1]

Besides acquiring control of the Court patronage and establishing his authority in the Parliament, Walpole had taken two other important steps to consolidate his hold on power. These were gaining influence with Queen Caroline (and, through her, with the King) and effecting secret understanding with some of the Opposition members. Neither of these significant aspects of Walpolean State-craft has been left unnoticed by Fielding but since we shall have occasion to deal with them in the subsequent chapters as well any consideration of them in the present chapter is being omitted.

c. Walpole's Policies as Criticised by Fielding

Fielding's comments on Walpole's policies, whether domestic or foreign, are neither very exhaustive nor very manifestly condemnatory, though his interest in them, like most of his educated and even not-so-well-educated compatriots, was keen and abiding. This fact is made evident by the allusions that we come across quite frequently in his plays to events and issues with which

1. Works, III, 361. Other attacks on clergymen in general and Walpole's bishops in particular are made in Pasquin in the allusion to the chaplains who are to be made of 'a most delicate piece of black wax' (Works, III, 283) and in the characterization of Firebrand who is presented as an ally of Ignorance, the reigning deity, according to Pope and other satirists, of Walpole's time.

Walpole was personally or principally concerned; in particular, the issues which either because of Walpole's actual shady involvement in them or because of the deliberate misrepresentation of the part he had played in them, had discredited him vastly in the public eye. But, as already mentioned, it would largely be a futile effort if we were to look for any direct or detailed and searching examination of them (the Excise scheme excepted). Most of the allusions that are made to them are essentially of an adventitious nature and, taken in themselves, reveal sufficiently neither the gravity of the issues concerned nor the satirical intentions of the author. It is only when we read them in the illuminating light of the controversies those issues had engendered in their time that their meaning and significance become both distinct and intelligible.

i. Walpole's Domestic Policies

The issues that Fielding thus alludes to are, on the domestic side, the following: the National Debt, the affairs of the South Sea Company and Charitable Corporations, the Excise Scheme and the Gin Act of 1736.

Fielding refers to "the debts of the nation" twice - once in the Coffee House Politician when he allows Politic to explain his fantastic project for paying them off "without a penny of money",[1] and again in Pasquin through Squire Tankard's ingenious

1. Works, I, 362.
Politic's project is that a machine be procured 'to carry

interpretation of the phrase[1] - with the obvious intention of making his own facetious contribution to the incessant debates and pamphleteering centering on Walpole's inability (owing largely to his own encroachments upon the Sinking Fund) to make any substantial reduction either in the amount of the National Debt itself or in the interest paid thereon.[2] Similarly, he speaks sarcastically of the "swindling Directors" (who trick others of their pelf with impunity) of the South Sea Company and Charitable Corporations on several occasions[3] to cast reflection not so much on the culprits themselves who had already been disgraced sufficiently as on the minister whose efforts in protecting them were so exceptional that no one, not even his

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ships by land about a hundred miles: and so prosecute the East India trade through the Mediterranean' - not entirely a wild proposal if seen retrospectively.

1. By 'the debts of the nation', of which he shall demand immediate payment when his party forms the government, Sq. Tankard means the huge amount of money (£5,000 each) he and Sir Harry have, in their zeal to serve the nation, spent on their elections.

2. Coxe, I, pp.367-68. For Hervey's criticism of Walpole's economic policy - that in 25 years of peace only two million, out of fifty, of National Debt could be paid - and of his (Walpole's) Opposition to John Barnard's proposal for reducing the rate of interest on the National Debt for personal and ministerial reasons, see Memoirs II, 447 and III, 726-32.

3. In the Author's Farce, Don Quixote and Lottery, see Works I, 322-23, 336; III, 91, 127; and II, 141. It may be mentioned incidentally that Sir Avarice Pendant of Temple Beau and Mr. Modern of Modern Husband had both lost their fortunes in the South-Sea Bubble (Works, I, 191 and II, 174).

closest friend, was disposed to believe that they were inspired purely by altruistic considerations.[1] The Gin Act of 1736, which, though not a child of his brain, had, nevertheless, exposed him to "much un-merited obloquy"[2] is alluded to in Tumble-Down Dick, Eurydice and Eurydice Hiss'd. In the first of these plays, which was staged when the bill was still being debated in the Commons, Fielding just recounts the special advantages - such as bribing the voters with a cheap potation and palming his harlequin-tricks upon the inebriated people - that have been accruing to Walpole through popular addiction to gin and which he is likely to forfeit once the bill becomes operative.[3] In Eurydice, which, like Eurydice Hiss'd, was written a few months after the passage of the bill, he glances at it rather innocuously when he shows the fond husband, Orpheus, assuring his quibbling wife that he would buy her "two gallons" of liquor to remove her objection (she does not want to accompany him back to the world of the living) that now, under the new legislation, "on the other side the river Styx ... no public house dare sell [her] a dram".[4]

1. Hervey describes some of the 'personal' reasons for which Walpole opposed every attempt to institute any inquiry into the affairs of the South Sea Company and Charitable Corporations (Hervey Memoirs, I, 186).
2. Coxe, I, 475. The bill was introduced by an independent member, Joseph Jekyll, on March 8, 1736, and was passed on Sept. 29, 1736. It imposed a duty of one pound on every gallon of the spirituous liquors and a licence fee of £50 per annum on their retailers. Pulteney had opposed it on the ground that it made an 'invidious distinction between the poor and the rich' by forbidding 'the use of the spirituous liquors to all those who are not able to purchase a certain number of gallons at a time ...'. Walpole, too, was not very enthusiastic about it because he feared a decrease in the State revenues (Cobbet, IX, 1038 et seq).
3. Works, vol. III, 435-36.
4. Ibid., 390.

In fact, it is only in his last play, the above-mentioned Eurydice Hiss'd, that Fielding attaches any significance to the Gin Act. Here he attributes, for the first time, this extremely unpopular Act to Walpole directly and, what is more important, sees in it an imminent destruction of his political power and, along with that, of his "farcical greatness". He tells him quite frankly that his silly joke about a "dram" and "two gallons" will get his "mighty force" - that is, his entire administration - irretrievably damned by the people as they are not going to take it submissively.[1]

The attention that Fielding pays to the most important project of Walpole, his ill-fated Excise Scheme of 1733, is to a great extent commensurable with the zeal and fondness that Walpole had professed for it but not at all with the rage and fury occasioned by it.[2] In almost all the plays written (or revised)

1. Ibid., 418. The fact that "mighty farce" stands for the Excise project as well as for Walpole's administrative set-up, has been noted above (page 70).

2. Walpole expressed his firm belief in the excellence of the Scheme, which according to his son was later conceded by its staunchest critics (H. Walpole, Memoirs, III, p.178), time and again. In his Letter from a Member of Parliament for a borough in the West, he, explaining the rejection of the Scheme, said 'The Thing was lost for not being generally understood; and interested Men, supported by angry Men, prevailed, by raising false Alarms'. Similarly, speaking in the House of Commons on February 4, 1734, he told the members that it was his opinion that the scheme, if it had been accepted, 'would have tended very much to the interest of the nation' (Coxe, I, 409). Craftsman's report (in the issue of 15 May, 1733) that 'the Projector of the Excise ... insolently persists in the uprightness of his Scheme' was perfectly correct.
   For the Excise frenzy, see Hervey (I, 132-67), Political Ballads (61-80), Plumb (II, 233-48), and E.R. Turner's article, 'The Excise Scheme of 1733' in the English Historical Review, XLII [1927].

after the Excise crisis he has worked in derisive and critical remarks either on the Scheme itself or on the events and incidents directly connected with it. In the enlarged version of the Author's Farce and in Don Quixote in England he speaks of the mad and frightened "Projectors".[1] In Pasquin he makes use of the famous anti-Excise slogan, "Liberty, and Property and no Excise", on four occasions, and, moreover, mentions meaningfully the departments of the Customs and Excise which can absorb a vast number of 'deserving' people.[2] In Tumble-Down Dick he alludes, rather indirectly, to Walpole's Excise 'dragon' and its litter of excisemen through Harlequin's devils, whom, but for Jupiter's timely action, he (Harlequin, that is, Walpole) had almost introduced into Heaven.[3] In the Historical Register he harps upon the much-debated and much-apprehended possibility of a general excise when he shows the blundering "politicians" in the opening scene of the play transported by the unexpected discovery that two commodities, Learning and Ignorance, were still un-levied.[4] But the play more particularly concerned with Walpole's project is Eurydice Hiss'd, which was staged two days after the Excise anniversary and nineteen days after the Craftsman had warned the

1. Works, I, 342; III, 127.
2. Ibid., III, pp.272, 274, 279 and 288; 281.
3. Ibid., p.445. Jupiter is of course George II (Jupiter of An Interlude and Jove of Vernoniad also represent him). Though the king was keenly interested in the success of the Scheme (Hervey, I, 149), it was not unusual for the Opposition journalists to dissociate him from it (For this, see the last but one stanza of Britannia Excisa, part I in Political Ballads p.66).
4. Works, III, 351.

public that "a certain great Projector" was bringing his "old scheme" again.[1] Here, in this play, in the practices and experiences of Pillage - such as his lobbying for his "farce", his firm reliance on his hired supporters, his defiance of the people, his inability to secure the backing of a single honest man - in the description of the manner in which Pillage's farce was received by the audience, and in Pillage's unshaken belief that "there never was a better farce" than his, Fielding has re-created, almost exactly, every single detail of Walpole's greatest misadventure.[2] The only point on which Fielding's account is at variance with the actual events and agrees more with the propagandistic literature of the Opposition press is

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1. No. 560, for March 26, 1737.

2. The Excise bill was received favourably when Walpole first presented it to the House on March 14, 1733. But during the next four weeks things took such a turn, thanks to the effectiveness of Opposition propaganda, that Walpole, losing every hope of seeing it through, had to withdraw it on April 11, 1733. (See Hervey I, 148; James Ralph, A Critical History of the Administration of Sir Robert Walpole [1743] p.216). The fluctuations in the attitude of the members of Parliament find an exact parallel in the attitude of Pillage's audience, which is graphically described by the 'Third Gentleman':

> at first the pit seem'd greatly pleas'd,
> And loud applauses through the benches rung,
> But as the plot began to open more,
> (A shallow plot) the claps less frequent grew,
> Till by degrees a gentle hiss arose;
> This by a catcall from the gallery
> Was quickly seconded: then follow'd claps,
> And 'twixt long clap and hisses did succeed,
> A stern contention. Victory hung dubious,
> So hangs the conscience, doubtful to determine,
> When honesty pleads here and there a bribe;
> At length, from some ill-fated actor's mouth,
> Sudden there issued forth a horrid dram,
> And from another rush'd two gallons forth:
> The audience, as it were contagious air,
> All caught it, halloo'd, catcall'd, hiss'd and groan'd.
> (Works, III, 417-18).

the depiction of Pillage's fall.[1] The Excise Crisis, we know for certain, far from bringing about Walpole's fall, or even making any immediate diminution in his power, had left him strong enough to "take summary vengeance" on those members of his party who had been lukewarm in supporting it.[2]

The Excise Crisis was indeed an affair which, from Walpole's point of view, was best forgotten. But the "summary vengeance" which took the form of unceremonious dismissal of a large number of important and influential persons - an action which, as we have seen, Fielding regarded unjust and un-called for - in no way helped to make it a dead issue. For this scheme, for these dismissals, and for another act of indiscretion committed by him during the Excise debates, namely, his application of the infamous phrase, the Sturdy Beggars,[3] to the London merchants who had petitioned against the Excise bill, Walpole was thoroughly lambasted both within the House and without. Fielding, too, in these unpleasant and insulting words saw a confirmation of what the hostile eyes had already seen much earlier: that Walpole

1. For highly exaggerated accounts of Walpole's discomfiture, see Whitehead's The State Dunces (1733), The Projector's Looking-glass: Being the Last Dying words and Confession of Sir Robert Marral (1733).
2. Plumb II, pp.272-81.
3. Coxe I, 401; Craftsman 18.8.1733. See also The Sturdy-Beggar's Garland (in Political Ballads, pp.79-80).

who had hitherto been turning a deaf ear to the piteous tale of Jenkin's amputated ear[1] and other equally moving accounts of the "depredations" of the Spanish guarda costa, in his attitude towards the business community was being decidedly not only unwhiggish but unpatriotic, too.[2] Allusions of this complexion are not very many in Fielding's plays but whatever they are they substantiate the above point sufficiently. In the revised version of the Author's Farce (staged nine months after the Excise crisis) we find a passage which epitomizes his views on the recent events. Speaking through Witmore, he says:

> I know none that thrive by profiting mankind, but the husbandman and the merchant: the one gives you the fruit of your own soil, the other brings you those from abroad; and yet these are represented as mean and mechanical ...[3]

This passage, particularly the last part of it, and the contemptuous remarks of the Courtiers in the Intriguing Chambermaid and Pasquin on the merchants - whom they call "the canaille", "the plebian scoundrels" and "mechanical rascals" and find pleasure in ruining them as well as their "low" trade[4] - carry not only an echo of Walpole's unforgettable phrase but also an unmistakable reflection upon what was supposed to be his mercantile policy.

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1. Horace Walpole, however, is reported to have said that Jenkins, whose ear was once exhibited in a sealed bottle, died with both of them intact. (Walpoliana, 1780, p.135).
2. For these allegations of the Opposition, see Cobbet, vol.VIII, Col. 682,83.
3. Works, I, 292.
4. Works, vol.III, pp.45-46, 278.
   In Jonathan Wild the Great the ruthless zeal of its 'hero' to

ii. Walpole's Foreign Policy

Walpole's foreign policy, of which pacifism was the only guiding principle and which, when seen in retrospect, appears to have done immense good to the nation, went, like everything else that he ever handled, largely unappreciated by his contemporaries. To some of them, particularly to those whose emotions could be swayed by the exaggerated accounts of the high-handedness of the Spaniards, it appeared too soft, too accommodating and, at times, detrimental to the interest and honour of the nation. To others, his sworn and implacable enemies, it was always so and something else besides: it was ambiguous, it was vacillating and it passed "all-understanding"[1] - or, to use a specific epithet, it was simply "blundering".[2] To be fair to such critics, one must admit that Walpole's exertions in this particular field more often than not lacked the finesse of an accomplished career diplomat. External affairs were not his forte; and they could never be, simply because he did not possess the requisite qualifications. He had never been out of England, had no personal contact with the European statesmen and, moreover, knew almost nothing about the conditions obtaining on the other

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undermine Heartfree symbolizes Walpole's hostility for the merchants. In Vernoniad as well Fielding presents Walpole (called Mammon) as an enemy of the merchants bent upon their utter destruction. For Walpole's inveterate and ill-concealed hatred for the London merchants, see Plumb II, 241-45 and the Champion for June 14, 1740.

1. See the following malediction upon Walpole and his cronies -- Prevent them ... O Lord, in all their Designs! Turn their Hearts and enlighten their Understanding ... and may that Peace, which passeth all understanding, make them h[an]g together in Unity and a-cord ... (Norfolk Congress, Craftsman, vol. III, App.)

2. Political Ballads, p.41. See also Lord Blunder's Confessions

side of the Channel.[1] He could have made up these serious deficiencies to a very great extent had he shown a different sort of prudence in the selection of his advisers, negotiators, and plenipotentiaries. But even for these important jobs, as for the less important ones, he usually preferred men whose attainments and capabilities were not as unquestionable as their loyalty and 'usefulness' to him. He preferred, to mention only a few cases, men like Thomas Pelham-Holles, the addle-headed Secretary of State, whose borough-influence made his loquacious stupidity endurable for Walpole but not for others;[2] Horatio Walpole, his trusted brother, whose mind according to his nephew "was a strange mixture of sense alloyed by absurdity, wit by mimicry, knowledge by buffoonry, bravery by meanness, honesty by selfishness...", and who in actuality was "a dead weight on his brother's ministry";[3] William Stanhope, the Earl of Harrington, who "needed six hours to dress, six hours to eat, six hours with his mistress and six for sleep";[4] and the "hard-drinking, hard-hunting, half-literate"

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and the Craftsman of 17.1.1730, 13.6.1730 and 23.1.1731.

1. This handicap is pointed out by Horace Walpole. In his Memoirs (1846, I, 234) he says:
   > Sir Robert Walpole's mastery was understanding his own country, and his foible, inattention to every other country, for which it was impossible he could thoroughly understand his own.

   See also Plumb, II, 38.

2. Hervey I, 131, 209; II, 580-2, 595-6; III, 842-3.

3. Horace Walpole, Memoirs, I, 141; See also Hervey I, 285; II 367-9.

4. Plumb II, 41. See, also, Plumb's remarks on Waldegrave and Robinson (II, 221), Hervey's on Harrington (I, 174), Caleb's on the mock-minister and his stupid ambassadors (Craftsman, 23 January 1731) and the ballad, 'Le Heup at Hanover' on Walpole's envoy to the Diet at Ratisbon, Isaac Leheup, who had married Horace Walpole's sister-in-law (Political Ballads, pp.17-19).

Charles Churchill.[1] These men had hardly any competence for diplomatic jobs and the way they went about them naturally invited ridicule. Besides, there were some concrete and hard-to-ignore facts which contributed a good deal towards making Walpole's foreign policy look more amateurish than it actually was. In this connection, one may mention his much-lauded, much maligned 'pacifism' itself which, because it allowed neither any abatement in the preparations for war nor any reduction in the amount of subsidies doled out to foreign powers, was proving more expensive and burdensome than an actual war;[2] his "wooden treaties",[3] each one of which created a situation more complex than the one it was meant to resolve and, thus, necessitated fresh and more strenuous efforts for treating-making; his Standing Army, any change in whose static position had become as impossible as any variation in the pattern of the debates occasioned by it;[4] and, finally, his "merry-making", "stay-at-home" armada at Spithead which for several months fired away considerable quantity of "complimental gunpowder" and then quietly un-rigged.[5] With all these much-too-obvious paradoxes, with his

1. Plumb, II, 220-2.
2. Subsidies were paid to Denmark, Sweden, and the German principalities (Plumb II, 121 and 230). On Walpole's 'war-like peace' see Craftsman of 17.1.1730 and 11.7.1730; Political Ballads pp.23-25 and 41-43.
3. The Wooden Age: 'A Satyrical Poem. Humbly Inscrib'd to William Pulteney Esq;' (1733). See also Egmont II, 13.
4. For the annual ritual of the introduction of the Mutiny Bill and its criticism, see Cobbet, vol.VIII, columns 46, 60, 377, 404, 497, 547, 647, 677-80, 771, 1010 and vol. IX, columns 262, 283, 348, 352, 519, 1311 ...
5. Political Ballads, pp. 22-25.

own and his assistant's much-too-obvious limitations, and with the sight of the fruits of his long years of peace still denied to the naked eye, one need not wonder that Walpole's foreign policy failed to meet with general approbation.

It certainly did not meet with Fielding's approbation. His comments on it, though few and far between, and, in most cases, hardly more than a re-hashing (often a burlesque) of the material dashed off by the party-writers, show quite amply that he had no admiration for it. Leaving aside the Coffee-House Politician, which contains an innuendo on the protracted negotiations at Soisson (which took three years to decide whether there should be "peace or no") and some driftless remarks on Don Carlos and the "siege of Gibraltar"[1] - the issues whose importance one can gauge by the time and space given to them by the House of Commons and the journalists respectively[2] - we have three plays, namely, the Grub-Street Opera, Pasquin and the Historical Register, in which Fielding speaks sneeringly of Walpole's competence for external affairs, his pacifism and his Standing Army.

The earliest instance of Fielding's reflections on Walpole's diplomatic talents is to be found in the Grub-Street Opera where, making a travesty of Pulteney's attacks on the recent treaties -

1. Works, I, 361-62. For another allusion to the siege of Gibraltar, see The Temple Beau (Works, I, 214).
2. For these, see Cobbet vol. VIII, columns 548, 682 etc; the articles of the Treaties of Seville (1729) and Hanover (1731); the issues of the Craftsman of 1729-31; and Political Ballads, p.16.

that is, the Treaties of Seville and Vienna[1] - he speaks through William, who, as already pointed out, represents Pulteney in the play, of Walpole's "peace-making" as one of his "secret-services" whose sense and significance are so obscure and shrouded in mystery that no one, not even the devil himself can make head or tail of them.[2] This charge of un-intelligibility of Walpole's peace-negotiations is presented again in Pasquin where Fielding announces through Mr. Fustian, the author of the tragedy, "The Life and Death of Common Sense", that "the present general peace of Europe" - that is, the armistice following the War of the Polish Succession - is so confused and complicated that even Common Sense is "not able thoroughly to comprehend it".[3] It is in this very play that Fielding uses for the first time that phrase - "the greatest blunderer"[4] - which, as mentioned elsewhere, was applied to Walpole chiefly in connection with his conduct of external affairs. But, the most offensive gibe at Walpole and his minister's incompetence (hence their lack of interest) for these matters is made in the Historical Register where his cabinet is shown deciding to "hang foreign affairs" as it has found them not only very tricky but un-rewarding too.[5] Providing an obvious explanation (besides his own inaptitude) for Walpole's erratic

1. See Pulteney's A Proper Reply to a Late Scurrilous Libel (1731,p.6)
2. Works, II, 92.
3. Ibid., III, 312.
4. Ibid., III, 321.
5. Ibid., III, 349-50.

tackling of foreign issues, Fielding has introduced some subtle innuendoes upon the persons whom Walpole used to send on diplomatic missions and on whose "shifting impressions" and not very accurate assessments of the international issues (for they could be, as often they were, out-witted and over-reached by the seasoned statesmen of the foreign courts) he used to base his policies.[1] One can easily detect these innuendoes, provided one does not lose sight of the reputation of the persons mentioned in the paragraph preceding the last, in Sancho's confident belief that he will "make a very good bassadour" since the ambassadors do nothing but "lead rare fat lives",[2] in the bastard of Apollo's impromptu on a "droll" ambassador[3] - this was meant particularly for Horatio - and in Medley's statement that not until one year has elapsed are people in England likely to know what the great European powers like Spain, France and Austria are about at present.[4]

Walpole's predilection for peace, which according to Lord Hervey sprang from a variety of motives and considerations,[5] and

1. Plumb, II, 39.
2. Works, III, 73.
3. Ibid., 368.
4. Ibid., 351.
5. Hervey describes them as follows:
   > This great minister [Walpole], besides the interest of England ... was induced by some personal considerations to stick firm to the point of keeping this nation out of war if possible. In the first place, to avoid the unpopularity of advising war and creating new clamour against his Administration; in the next, he knew the ungrateful task of raising money to support war would all fall to his share, and added to this, I believe

which on occasions did run to excessive and almost absurd lengths, is ridiculed in the Grub-Street Opera and Pasquin. In the former play, Walpole the pacifist, just as Walpole the rogue and lover, is represented by Robin, the "honest Bob", who piques himself on the fact that throughout his life he has not once been "guilty of faction and strife". Unlike the impetuous and bellicose William, he is "for no fighting" since, he fears, it will bring to nought all the strenuous efforts he has been making to preserve peace in the parish.[1] His self-complimentary words sound very much like the tall talk of a born braggart; but they are not entirely so, for Robin's "peaceable" disposition is vouched for by others too - by his patroness, Lady Apshinken, and even by his enemy, William, who, speaking rather sarcastically, expresses his preparedness to "warrant" that Robin will "not strike a blow, unless he's forced to it".[2] But, for William, as far as Robin's "peace-making" is concerned, there is absolutely nothing in it to boast of. He sees no merit in it; and, moreover, it defies all comprehension. In any case, his pacifism has little to do with his pretended concern for his master's tenants. To his mind, Robin's distaste for fighting proceeds purely from his self-interest and cowardice, and his ostentatious love for peace as well as his love for the parishioners is just a humbug. It is his fear

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he was not without apprehension that more military business might throw the power he now possessed into the hands of military men. (Memoirs, II, 344; see also Hardwicke's Walpoliana, p.7).

1. Works, II, 92.
2. Ibid., 119.

"of getting a black eye, or bloody nose, in the squabble" that has made Robin an advocate of non-violence, otherwise, William is quite convinced, he would not mind setting "the whole parish a boxing".[1]

This, of course, is nothing but a sheer burlesque of the debates started by Walpole's recent diplomatic achievement, the Treaty of Vienna of 1731, which to the bewilderment of all concerned, including Horatio, had completely undermined the painfully reached agreements of the Treaty of Seville.[2] In Pasquin Fielding deals with another 'peace' offensive of Walpole, the one which brought the War of the Polish Succession - which, because of the implications of the above mentioned Treaties and George II's eagerness to join the war and win military trophies, was becoming more and more embarrassing for Walpole[3] - to an end in October, 1735 and produced some thirty months after the cessation of hostilities yet another Treaty of Vienna.[4] This 'peace' is alluded to in an interesting scene between two female politicians, Miss Mayoress and Miss Stitch, the adherents of the Court and Country parties respectively, who, relinquishing the insoluble riddle of the sex of the editor of the Daily Gazetteer, proceed to

1. Ibid., 92.
2. The Treaty of Seville, which was signed in December 1729 after 3 years of tedious negotiations, was essentially pro-French, and the Treaty of Vienna, pro-Austrian.
3. Hervey describes (II, 340-44, 445-46) George II's impatience and Walpole's difficulties in restraining him.
4. Though Walpole claimed all the credit for restoring peace in Europe (Hervey II, 529; Cobbet, IX, columns 970-71 - King's Address to the Lords and Commons), Basil Williams holds that

discuss the most burning topic of the day in the following manner:

Miss Stitch. Well, then, pray let me ask you seriously - are you thoroughly satisfied with this peace?

Miss (Mayoress). Yes, Madam, and I think you ought to be so too.

Miss Stitch. I should like it well enough, if I were sure the Queen of Spain was to be trusted.

Miss (Mayoress). (Rising) Pray, Miss, none of your insinuations against the Queen of Spain.

Miss Stitch. Don't be in a passion, Madam.

Miss (Mayoress). Yes, Madam, but I will be in a passion, when the interest of my country is at stake.[1]

Here, through these fiery partisans, Fielding has presented in a nutshell all that was being said, and perhaps all that could be said, in the early months of 1736, by the two political parties about the recent armistice - Miss Stitch, like Caleb D'Anvers (whose papers she gets by heart) and other spokesmen of the Opposition, showing certain well-grounded doubts about the effectiveness of a Peace against the terms and conditions of which Elizabeth Farnese, the Queen of Spain, had reacted so strongly and indignantly, and Miss Mayoress, an avid reader of the Daily Gazetteer, taking strong exception, like other admirers of Walpole, to any attempt

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he was 'politely edged out by Fleury from the negotiations for Peace'. (The Whig Supremacy, [1962], pp.206-07).

1. Works, III, p.289.

at detracting from his prodigious achievement.[1] That this 'peace' too, the pros and cons of which these mettlesome ladies pretend to understand, has, in Fielding's opinion, as little to do with common sense as Walpole's earlier ones we have noticed above; but there is one thing, connected directly with Walpole's 'peace-making' - since it added to its incomprehensibility - which we have yet to talk about. And that is the obnoxious Standing Army,[2] to which Fielding has referred repeatedly in Pasquin and in a few other plays besides.

Fielding's allusions to the Standing Army touch upon the following aspects of it: the adverse effects on individuals of the fluctuations in its size, its unpopularity with the masses and the reasons for that, the divergent views about its usefulness for the country, and the non-martial character or reputation of its rank-holders. Our attention to the first point is drawn in the Coffee-House Politician where, glancing at the events of 1727-28,[3] Fielding describes how one of his characters, Constant, on his return from the East Indies found "the prospect of war" with Spain in "everyone's eyes" and, being assured of the approach of it "not only [by] the reports of the people, but [by] the

1. On this see Hervey (II 445-46), the Daily Gazetteer Nos. 197-200, the Opposition pamphlet, Observations on the Present Plan of Peace; see also the Craftsman No.505 (dated 6.3.1736) which mentions the Queen of Spain's secret overtures to Vienna, and Lyttelton's Persian Letters (Letter No. LXXV in 1735 edition).
2. For the 'savage' cry against the Standing Army (outlawed by the Bill of Rights (1688) in time of peace) during the 25 years (1714-39) of peace, see Turberville's Johnson's England (1933) vol.I, pp.66-87, and Hervey, II, pp.525-27.
3. In January 1727 the strength of the Army was raised by 8,000 troops on the plea that Spain was pressing for the restitution

augmentation of the troops" as well, how he, moved by his patriotic sentiments, lost his "small remains of fortune" in purchasing a Commission in the army, little suspecting that this war was not meant to be fought and that he too, after spending some uneventful days in the Army, will have to share the fate of the four thousand "brave fellows" and be "sent a-begging with a red coat on [his] back".[1] The unpopularity of the Standing Army is pointed out by Fielding in Don Quixote in England and Pasquin.[2] In the former, we find a harassed inn-keeper, anxious to get rid of an impecunious Spanish knight and his gluttonous companion, swearing:

> if ever I suffer a Spaniard to enter my doors again, may I have a whole company of soldiers quartered on me; for if I must be eaten up I had rather suffer by my own country rogues than foreign ones.[3]

Only a few pages later we again find, in the same play, the same knight being told by the Mayor of the town that if he could keep soldiers from quartering upon them, the entire town would be extremely beholden to him.[4] Similarly, in Pasquin we come across another Mayor who at one stage (when his sympathies are still with

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of Gibraltar. A year later, however, half of the number were discharged. (Cobbet, vol. VIII, Cols. 547, 647-8).

1. Works, vol. I, 412.
2. Another instance is to be found in the Letter Writers where Mr. Softly expresses his apprehension: 'we shall shortly have a standing army of rogues as well as of soldiers' (Works, II,44).
3. Ibid., III, 68.
4. What Mayor says to Quixote is as follows: 'I assure you, Sir, that will recommend you very much: if you can keep soldiers from quartering upon us'. This was in answer to Quixote's promise that 'No armies shall do you any harm' (Works, III, 87).

the Court party) attempts to popularize the ruling party by assuring the arma-phobic aldermen that it is

> the Country party [that] will bring a standing army upon us; whereas if we choose my Lord and the Colonel [the Court candidates], we shan't have a soldier in town.[1]

But within a short space of time, after he has been bribed and brain-washed by the candidates of the other party, this very Mayor, whose conscience is indistinguishable from his interests, changes his views and loyalties simultaneously and, preferring to run the risk of being deemed a Jacobite and Papist rather than lose his "Liberty and Property" at the hands of the soldiers, he denounces both the Courtiers and <u>their</u> Standing Army.[2] Now, on the face of it, none of these random remarks seems to be of any particular importance. But, when we think of the amount of breath and the reams of paper spent in the 1720's and '30's on the question of the land forces, their billeting and quartering, their undue pressure on the electorate, the plight of the keepers of public places (who, under the Mutiny Act, were obliged to provide board and lodging to the troops) and the oft-expressed fear that the Army, if long retained, may become a permanent part of the Constitution and alter the very "frame" of the government from a legal and limited monarchy to a despotic one, then these allusions gain in significance and reveal some of the reasons for which the very name of the Standing Army, already anathema for the man in the

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1. Ibid., III, 268-69.
2. Ibid., 279-80.

street for the past seventy years, had become more so in the days of Walpole.[1]

About the usefulness (or otherwise) of the Standing Army, Fielding has something of his own to say. The allusions noticed in the preceding paragraph, the experiences of Constant in the Coffee-House Politician, and of the Irish drummer in Pasquin (who has grown "tired of doing nothing" as he has spent twenty years in the army and has yet to know what his trade is)[2] and the reference to Fog's hilarious article on "the Advantages of a Waxen Army"[3] seem to indicate that Fielding concurred whole-heartedly with those critics of the Standing Army who regarded it not only as a useless, ridiculous body but also a public menace which was best got rid of. The fact is undeniable that nowhere in his plays does he speak well of the army,[4] and the

1. For these allegations see besides the Parliamentary debates mentioned on page 126 (note 4), the Craftsman of 22.6.1728, 13,7.1728, 9.11.1728, 1.8.1730, 4.3.1732 and 23.12.1732. The last mentioned number describes how the troops were quartered, by way of punishment, in those counties which had refused to return the ministerial candidates. It was mainly because of the harassment of the voters by the soldiers that Carteret presented a bill (on 15.4.1735) stipulating the withdrawal of the troops from the constituencies at least one day before the polling (Cobbet, IX, 882-911).

2. Works, III, 320.

3. Fog's Weekly Journal for January 17, 1736.

4. The only exception is where Ramble, following Constant's statement (see pp.133-34), speaks about 'our brave soldiers'. But these 'brave soldiers' belong to a different class, a class to which Captain Merit of the Modern Husband and the lame soldier of Amelia (vol. VIII, p.166) belong; these are the soldiers who have actually fought for the honour of their father-land, 'mounted a breach against an armed file of the enemy', brought 'colours' from the fields, and lost their limbs, but who, forgotten by an ungrateful people, find 'hospitality' only in the 'gaols'.

only characters whom he does allow to exhibit boundless admiration for it are those who belong to Mrs. Osborne's sex and party[1] - the indomitable Mrs. Mayoress who claims that "the standing army is a good thing" because it brings glamour to the place it is quartered in and meets "the women's wants", and her equally indomitable daughter who, probably because she is going to marry a colonel, "would part with every farthing" she is in possession of to maintain the Army.[2] But there is one sentence in this very play which makes one think that Fielding, despite his readiness to treat the Army as a laughing-stock,[3] was far from recommending a total disbandment of it - as others undoubtedly were. This significant sentence, uttered by Mr. Mayor in the first flush of victory in fisticuffs over Sir Harry's opponents, reads as follows:

> Ay, Sir Harry, at dry blows we always come off well; if we could but disband the army, I warrant we carried all our points.[4]

From this blatantly expressed wish of Mr. Mayor, who has all of a sudden become a Jacobite - he has "been drinking to the good old cause with Sir Harry"[5] - it is possible to infer that Fielding,

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1. The above mentioned article in the Fog's Weekly Journal refers to Mrs. Osborne's, and her 'whole sex's', preferring 'a live standing army' to a waxen one for 'private' considerations.
2. Works, III, pp.279-80, 290.
3. Such as in the 'Gin' song of Tumble-Down Dick (Works, III, p.435), and in the auction scene of Historical Register (Works, III, pp. 360-61).
4. Works, III, p.284.
5. Ibid., p.286.

a law-abiding citizen and a staunch whig, strongly believed that the only thing that stood between order and anarchy, frustrated the nefarious designs of the Jacobites and guaranteed the continuity of the Protestant Succession, was the Army and, as such, it was an institution of the utmost importance for the country. But this, however, does not mean that he approved of the way it was thought to be employed by Walpole. In peace-time, Fielding probably believed that the Army could be legitimately kept, but only as a police force and not as an instrument of oppression and intimidation.[1]

So far as the army-personnel is concerned, not much is to be said here. Whatever strictures Fielding has passed on Walpole's patronage system in general apply to the army as well since the appointments and promotions in it, though nominally in the hands of the King, were virtually controlled by Walpole. While discussing the patronage system we had occasion to refer to Fielding's attempt at ridiculing some of the recent changes in the Army - the filling up of the places made vacant by the removal of Cobham, Bolton, Stair, Pitt and others - by showing, in the Historical Register, the part of a "warrior" being assigned to one

1. Walpole's avowed aim in keeping a standing army was not much different from this. The reasons he gave to Hervey in this connection referred to 'the disputed title to this Crown', 'the natural temper of our countrymen', and 'the licentiousness under the name of liberty that reigns in this [country]'. (Hervey II, 527). But there is no denying the fact that he regarded (and used) the army as the chief support to the 'Ministerial Power' (See Hardwicke's Walpoliana, 1783, p.7; Hervey, I, 257-8, 445-46).

who cannot even brandish a sword. The character of an army-beau (Captain Weazle) in Eurydice - which gave offence to the soldiers present among the audience and, thus, sealed the fate of the farce[1] - and that of Colonel Promise in Pasquin, whose "business is not to fight" but to withdraw the moment the battle begins, also carry reflections of a similar nature. And so does the "bottle of Courage" in the Historical Register, the efficacy of which is to be felt by Walpole's officers in particular since they are not likely to go abroad on active service. The most incisive attack on Walpole's appointment of inexperienced and incapable men to high positions in the army is, however, made in a play which because of the discouraging reception of Eurydice Fielding left incomplete. In An Interlude Between Jupiter, Juno, Apollo and Mercury, just a skit of four scenes but loaded with political innuendo,[2] Walpole is alluded to as Plutus, the God of Wealth, who, the deities are informed by Apollo,

> ventures to make free with Mars himself; and sometimes ... puts men at the head of military affairs, who never saw an enemy, nor of whom an enemy ever could see any other than the back.[3]

And this, we have Field-Marshal John Campbell's words for it, was no exaggeration.[4]

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1. Dudden I, 189. In Eurydice Hiss'd Fielding, however, transfers to Walpole in a subtle way the odium he had incurred on this occasion by making it clear that whatever beaus are to be found in the Army are of Pillage's making, (Works, III, 412).
2. William Peterson, 'Satire in Fielding's An Interlude ...', MLN LXV [1950], 200-202.
3. Works, VIII, p.64.
4. Speaking on December 9, 1740, John Campbell, the Duke of Argyll, said in the Parliament that the commissions in the Army were

d. Walpole and the People

Although the antagonism between the Administration and the people was not a phenomenon peculiar to the England of 1720's and 1730's - it was the distinctive feature of the entire century - it was certainly at its peak during these two decades. Right from the time of Queen Anne down to the middle of George III's long reign the two sides were almost constantly at odds with each other and, with the solitary exception of Chatham, no first minister of the country was ever able to enjoy the affection and the confidence of the people for any considerable length of time. But, at the same time, among these successive non-popular ministers of the 18th century not one was so consistently unpopular with the masses as Robert Walpole was. Throughout the twenty-two years of his premiership he was despised and denounced by his countrymen with a zeal and relish which have remained un-paralleled even to

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being bestowed (as they had no doubt been in the past) on persons who neither had 'knowledge and Bravery' nor any idea of a 'Battle', but were 'in some Degree or other allied to some Member of the Senate, or the leading voters of a Borough' (Argyll's speech was published in the Gentleman's Magazine of December, 1741 [p.619] though according to Cobbet [vol. XI, 894] it was delivered on the date I have mentioned). These words were uttered by the Duke when he had ceased to hold any place in the army and had become an active member of the Opposition. But there is no reason to believe that while attacking the Administration he was referring to the most recent events only and not drawing upon the past experiences of his long association with the Army. As early as Feb. 13, 1734, he had declared in the House that he was not prepared to deem as soldiers those officers in the Army who 'had never served but in peace' - a remark which gave umbrage to several rank-holding members of Parliament (though it was meant only for the Duke of Bolton) who because of the twenty-one years of peace belonged, necessarily, to the class Argyll had scoffed at (For this incident see Hervey I, 245-46).

this date. As long as he held the reins of the government, there hardly was a time when his motives were not questioned, his policies not deliberately misunderstood, his words and actions not maliciously misinterpreted and his private affairs not publicly discussed and ridiculed. Whenever he embarked upon an ambitious scheme people burnt his effigies in London and at places far away from London. Whenever he experienced a set-back, they lit bonfires all over the country. No public figure of any time was given such a long string of uncomplimentary aliases and nicknames as he was. No single individual, in any age, was so familiarly known to his contemporaries by his aliases and nicknames as he was. The innumerable satirists of the period, for whose mills everything was a grist that had the remotest connection with Walpole, glutted the market with lampoons and squibs, and the most scurrilous of them found ready buyers for their products. Not once in these twenty-two years did they feel the necessity of slackening their efforts. Not once throughout this long period did the people feel they were having too much of the stuff. Their adverse interest in the deeds and misdeeds (for them they were indistinguishable) of their prime minister did not flag until he was hounded away from the political scene.

The obloquy and the odium heaped on Walpole by his countrymen was no doubt much more than what he deserved; but for this he had to thank himself. He had the gifts and gumptions of a popular leader. He was a sociable person, he had an affable and genial

temperament, he knew the art of casting spells on others and he had a profound understanding of human nature. All these qualities he displayed in his dealings with the individuals, and, on these occasions, he always made a good use of them. With these qualities he could very easily have endeared himself to the people had he so willed. But he did not. Since in the existing system of the country he found that popular support was of no avail, specially for the day to day business of the administration, he did not consider it worth his while to court it. He never seems to have fully understood the worth and the force of public opinion. He aimed at acquiring a complete control of Parliament and, with this narrow end in view, he spent all his time and energy, employed all sorts of means and expedients, to obtain and retain the backing of those powerful men who held most of the boroughs in their fee and, therefore, commanded large followings in the two Houses. Because of this over-riding consideration, he never allowed his mind to stray out of the four walls of the Westminster Hall, unless it was to look after the vested interests of his own and of his supporters. Occasions were indeed very few when he revealed any genuine concern for the people at large; and whenever he did, it only raised the eyebrows of one and all, for, possessing neither demagogic impulses nor humanitarian instincts and having no special liking for the grateful admiration of his generation or for the posthumous rewards of the coming ones,[1] he had spoken irreverently of public weal and

1. For Walpole's notorious unconcern for the future, see Hervey, Memoirs, I, 18.

public-spirit a bit too frequently and a bit too publicly to be taken seriously on these occasions. For this attitude he was never forgiven by his countrymen. The universal dislike and distrust that attended Walpole throughout his public career were, strictly speaking, a product of this attitude.

At the time Fielding was writing for the stage this quarrel was at its bitterest. Fielding was a staunch Whig, he cherished orthodox whig ideals and principles (which were essentially democratic)[1] and he could not but look with disgust and indignation at Walpole's studied efforts to insult and

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1. Fielding presented his views on the privileges of the people in the prologue of the Coffee-House Politician. I quote the most important lines of it --

> Then only reverence to pow'r is due,
> When public welfare is its only view:
> But when the champions, whom the public arm
> For their own good with pow'r, attempt their harm,
> He sure must meet the general applause,
> Who 'gainst those traitors fights the public cause.

This passage, and Honestus' criticism of Pillage in Eurydice Hiss'd, show how firmly Fielding believed in the Lockean principles of constitutional government. But one important point is to be noted. Fielding's conception of democracy was not exactly the same as ours. Like the most progressive and liberal thinkers of the period, he always distinguished 'democracy' from 'mobocracy'. How profound his distrust of 'the mob' (Bolingbroke's 'monstrous beast' - see letter to Swift, dated 10 July 1721) was, can be gathered from his description of the 'good-natured disposition of the mob' in Tom Jones (I, ix; Works VI, 50). His note on the word 'mob' (given on the same page) reads as follows:

> Whenever this word [mob] occurs in our writings, it intends persons without virtue or sense, in all stations; and many of the highest rank are often meant by it.

(See also the Jacobite Journal of 8 October 1748 and A Dialogue between a Gentleman of London ... For Caleb's distinction between 'the people' and 'the mob', see Craftsman for 18.8.1733).

antagonize the public. To him, as to many other whigs, it was an act of downright apostasy on Walpole's part, a rejection of the most vital part of the constitution, a virtual re-establishment of the outlawed personal form of government. Naturally, he felt very strongly about it. And even if he had not espoused Whig cause it is unlikely he would have felt otherwise. Aspiring to be a popular dramatist, he could not possibly remain un-influenced by the ever-mounting resentment of the people against Walpole - especially of that section of the people which was most voluble and political-minded, the people who lived within the bounds of the metropolis, who looked upon themselves as the guardians of the rights and prerogatives of the entire nation and who, therefore, fought against Walpole's encroachments upon those rights and prerogatives tooth and nail. It was these people, who hated and were hated by Walpole, that formed Fielding's audiences, and Fielding as much out of personal convictions as out of purely earthly reasons had to sympathize with them wholeheartedly. Years before Captain Hercules Vinegar was to establish his Court of Judicature at Hockley in the Hole, Fielding had decided to champion the cause of the "whole Nation Plaintiff" against "one single Man Defendant".

He decided to do this as early as March, 1730. I have mentioned elsewhere that one of the reasons behind Fielding's peculiar predilection for the State-Stage parallel was, that, among other things, it enabled him to reflect critically upon

Walpole's uncommendable attitude towards his countrymen. He used this parallel for this purpose in the early version of the Author's Farce and in a number of subsequent plays; and in each one of them he equated Walpole with the insolent, imperious and wrong-headed potentates of the theatrical world in his covetousness for people's money, in-attention to their needs and demands and an utter disregard for their reactions to his policies and measures. Marplay's imprecations on the grumbling 'town' (whose protests against the raising of the price for his plays he refuses to take into account)and his willingness to let anyone who "loves hissing" have "three shillings worth" at him, typify the above-mentioned features of Walpole's relations with the people in general and the City of London in particular. And so do Harlequin's picking of pocket (of a poet) and his unconcern at being damned a thousand times, the bastard of Apollo's (and Ground-Ivy's) nonchalant acceptance of people's hostility so long as they continue to give him their pence and Pistol's deliberate confusion of the unmistakable popular condemnation with universal commendation. Insinuations of a similar nature are presented somewhat more forcefully in Eurydice Hiss'd where Pillage, a besotted theatre-manager, reveals an itch for the people's money though he abhors and abominates them profoundly and unfeignedly. His defiance of the 'town' and of the people is much more stubborn (and, therefore, closer to Walpole's) than either of Marplay, or of Apollo, or of anyone else as it is based upon firm personal convictions. He believes that a Manager (that is, a Prime Minister) is not a

"servant of the public", that he is privileged to make excessive demands upon its purse without any obligation to make his "additional expense apparent" or to provide better fare in return for it, that it would be completely out of keeping with his rank and character if he were to be guided and governed by its whims and wishes. Pillage stands in need of its 'pence' (to meet the necessities of 'theatre-administration') and these he will have in the old fashion, that is, by forcing the public to accept and pay for his cheap, worthless productions. He has no use for its good will, confidence, and gratitude, as he does not care to be remembered kindly by them. In fact, he has far too low an opinion of the people to strive to win their heart. His vision is far too myopic to make him aspire for greater, nobler and more enduring things.

The above instances show amply that Fielding regarded Walpole's treatment of the people highly objectionable, but they by no means exhaust the strictures of this kind. It may be mentioned in passing that Robin's efforts to make his master hard upon his tenants and his prevention of the flood-gates of his (master's) generosity and benevolence from being opened to them,[1] Lord Richly's belief that the entire human race is his tenant and he can treat it as outrageously as he chooses to since grandeur and position entitle one to that,[2] Sancho's observations on

1. Works, II, p.92.
2. Ibid., 193.

'wise' governors who plunder the very people they are supposed to protect and patronize,[1] and self-assured Quidam's callous indifference to how people receive him (if they 'hiss', he 'can stand the hisses of them all')[2] are also a part of Fielding's long, severe, and sometimes tortuous indictment of Walpole on this particular score.

e. Walpole's Fall

One who rules arbitrarily and flouts public opinion persistently is not likely to be allowed (though Walpole was) to remain on the public scene for long. Sooner or later he will have to pay his reckoning. Like most of the Opposition writers who were comparing Walpole with real and fictional tyrants and wishing him an end similar to theirs,[3] Fielding also speculates a good deal on this subject and makes mention of all the conceivable modes of exit for Walpole from the stage he had dominated so long - such as through hanging, through the interposition of super-human agencies, through popular agitation. The possibility, and also the propriety, of Walpole's being hanged is obliquely pointed out in the Author's Farce when Joan regrets that her good-for-nothing husband has not shared his "merits" which

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1. Works, III, 103-04.
2. Ibid., 372.
3. See the Craftsman of 8.5.1727, 20.5.1727, 8.2.1729, 7.6.1729, 21.4.1733; Whitehead's State Dunces; Mordecai Triumphant: or the Fall of Haman (1742).

would have made his neck "longer by half a yard"[1] and, again, in the Grub-Street Opera when Margery expresses her fear that Robin might be taken "in a cart to the tree".[2] The allusion to the "cart" with all its implications recurs in Tumble-Down Dick where Fielding in a subtle way turns the tables on Walpole's protege, Henley, who had prophesied a Tyburn performance for Fielding in his paper, and shows 'Harlequin' actually mounting a cart.[3] The wish that the powers above (that is, the king) will ultimately intervene and put a stop to Walpole's rash and erratic conduct of affairs occurs in the play I have named just now; it is implied in its sub-title, Phaeton in the Suds and, also, in a passage where Jupiter announces his determination to incapacitate Harlequin from playing his wild pranks any longer.[4]

The above allusions are, however, not to be taken seriously for there is no reason to believe that Fielding either really wished Walpole the fate of common criminals (besides, Robin has "too much wit to be hang'd") or considered it very likely that George II would ever dismiss his favourite minister on his own initiative. Far more important for our consideration are the allusions that Fielding makes to Walpole's coming to grief at the

1. Works, I, 320.
2. Ibid., II, 68.
3. Ibid., III, 447. On this allusion, see Baker's article in PMLA, LXXVII 1962 . Baker also suggests that 'Monsieur Pantomime's' broken neck in Author's Farce (Works, I, 324) signifies Walpole's fall.
4. Works, III, 445.

hands of the people themselves, for through them we come to know not only of his strong conviction that such a thing will happen but also of the way he wanted it to happen. As stated above, Fielding was a devout Whig; he believed in the sovereignty of the people as a whole and in the sanctity and inviolability of the laws that guaranteed that sovereignty. He, therefore, did expect that one day or the other the people would assert themselves and put an end both to Walpole's provocative attitude and to his political career. But, still, by alluding to this possibility and by listing the grievances of the people, he did not aim at raising a general insurrection against Walpole. He had no liking for popular uprisings; he abhored mob-violence. Preservation of law and order was always a matter of supreme importance for him; it was something which in his view transcended every other consideration. Therefore, he did not recommend (as others did) adoption of violent means to get rid of Walpole. To be sure, in one of the two plays where he depicts Walpole's fall he does ascribe a fatal end to him, but that was to frighten and to fore-warn Walpole and not to prescribe a course of action for the public.[1] For bringing Walpole to his knees, for rendering him politically impotent, Fielding suggested a novel method which would make spilling of blood and splitting of skulls quite unnecessary, a method which bears strong resemblance to the

1. In Tragedy of Tragedies, where the Cow that swallows Tom Thumb represents the people (see page 36); the other play is of course Eurydice Hiss'd.

civil disobedience movements of Gandhian conception. He simply asks his injured and angry countrymen to stop paying taxes to the government treasury. Since money is the be all and the end all of Walpole's policies, since the whole edifice of his administration rests upon money - it is the public money which enables him to hire actors at "exorbitant prices" and rule in "somewhat too arbitrary" a manner[1] - and since Walpole and his actors, not minding in the least the verbal protests, will continue to "laugh at the public behind the scenes" as long as they "receive their pay",[2] he urges upon them the necessity of withholding the supply of this vital commodity from him. The money comes from the pocket of the people; they must be allowed to "decide what they will pay for";[3] they must have a say in the government of the country. But if this right is denied to them, if their will is ignored and their voice unheard, then they should decline to part with their money. The moment they do so, Fielding assures them, Walpole's stay in power will become impossible, his insolence and his supporters will disappear along with his power, and their own supremacy will be recognized. For Fielding there was nothing unreasonable or very revolutionary about this suggestion as it amounted to no more than refusing payment to a

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1. The Historical Register, Dedication to the Public (Works, vol.III, p.336).
2. Ibid., p.364.
3. Eurydice Hiss'd (Works, III, 413).

piper who insists on playing to his own tunes. It was this step which brought about the fall of the autocrats in the past and it was this step which Fielding hoped people would take to bring about Walpole's fall. That they had recourse to other measures does not establish the infeasibility of his proposal.

CHAPTER IV

THE OPPOSITION, 1726-37

The most remarkable thing about the Opposition that harried and worried Walpole in 1726-37 and eventually succeeded in driving him out of office in early 1742 is, as pointed out by Lord Macaulay, that it was "created by his [Walpole's] own policy, by his own insatiable love of power".[1] Its foundations were laid as early as June 1720,[2] when after having spent more than two years in attacking the administration of the day, which since the accession of George I was dominated by the powerful Whig faction of Stanhope and Sunderland, Walpole secretly patched up his quarrel with the Ministry and re-joined it along with his brother-in-law, Charles Townshend. This subtle move of Walpole gave offence to all those who had gone into the opposition with him and were now left in the lurch, but to none more than to William Pulteney, who with Walpole and Townshend had formed a triumvirate against Stanhope and Sunderland and given up his place as Secretary at War in 1717 in order to keep company with his close friends. Pulteney was a man of parts. In Lord Sherburne's words, he was "by all accounts the greatest House of Commons' orator that ever appeared".[3] With his business acumen, understanding of the intricate matters of public finance, and vast

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1. The Earl of Chatham (Lond. 1905), p.17.
2. Plumb places it in 1717 when Walpole, disregarding Pulteney's advice, had started hob-nobbing with the Tories in order to harass Stanhope and Sunderland. (Plumb, Walpole, 1, 249).
3. Quoted by Realey, 161.

parliamentary experience he could make excellent use of his rhetorical skill. Moreover, he was a man of learning and wit, having a "happy turn to the most amusing and entertaining kinds of poetry"[1] as well as for polemical writings in prose. He could write terse epigrams, exhilarating political ballads and devastating tracts and pamphlets. Partly because of the awareness of his own superior merits but mainly because of his fidelity to Walpole, Pulteney had expected to play a prominent part in Walpole's political manouverings. But Walpole kept him totally in the dark until he had completed his negotiations with the ministry. Pulteney, as remarkable for his fiery, impetuous temperament as for his more commendable qualities, took it as a positive insult and though he accepted the offices that Walpole offered him from time to time (such as Lord-Lieutenancy of East Rising, Cofferership of Household[2]) and though he remained silent for a number of years in expectation of offices of greater importance, he never forgave Walpole for this affront. That hatred for Walpole which was to remain unabated throughout Pulteney's life had taken root in his heart at this moment.[3] It needed only an excuse to reveal itself; and that excuse was provided by Walpole in 1724 when, forgetting his promises, he passed over Pulteney and appointed the more tractable "hubble-bubble" Pelham Holes as the new Secretary of State in the place

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1. Chesterfield, Letters and Characters, 1415.
2. Coxe, Walpole, 1, 357; Pulteney played a very significant role in the trial of Atterbury, the Bishop of Rochester, as well. He, however, declined the peerage as by this means Walpole wanted to remove him from the House of Commons.
3. Plumb, 1, 292.

vacated by Carteret. This appointment proved to be the proverbial straw; the final breach between Walpole and Pulteney was made.[1] This fact was made known to the members of the House of Commons in April 1725 when Pulteney, speaking against the Civil List Debts, found an opportunity to attack Walpole in the bitterest possible terms (this cost him the two places mentioned above), and to the world outside in December 1726, when in conjunction with Walpole's old antagonist, Henry Saint John, Viscount Bolingbroke, and his own cousin Daniel Pulteney, he launched the famous anti-ministerial paper, The Craftsman.

In the opinion of most of the Whig historians of the later days, including Lord Macaulay, it was a great mistake on Walpole's part to let a man of Pulteney's stature and talents go into opposition. But it was a mistake which Walpole was particularly fond of committing again and again, and, therefore, it has been said correctly that like its birth, the Opposition (the 'new' Opposition, to use Realey and Plumb's phrase) owed to Walpole its growth and future strength as well.[2] Pulteney was neither the first nor the last of the talented Whigs who were obliged to join the Opposition. The process of weakening and eliminating the Stanhope-Sunderland faction, which Walpole had started in 1717, had continued to operate even after the death of the two leaders.

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1. Hervey, Memoirs, 1, 7-8.
2. See Horace Walpole, Memoirs, 1, 231.

John Carteret, upon whom the mantle of the leadership of that faction had fallen, was removed from the Cabinet (as Secretary of State) in 1724 despite the fact that, with his proficiency in foreign affairs, he was an asset to the Ministry. A few years later, in 1730, the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland was also taken away from him although throughout this period he had remained, as he had promised, more than subservient to Walpole.[1] After Carteret's disgrace the other remaining members of his group - such as William Cadogan, Master General of Horses, and Duke of Roxburgh, Secretary of State for Scotland - could not stay in office for long. Only one member of this group, Lord Berkeley, managed to defy Walpole's attempts to dislodge him, but that was mainly due to George I's predilection for him, a predilection which, however, was not shared by his son upon whose succession Walpole lost no time in finding a new and more docile Lord of Admiralty. In the wake of the Excise crisis came the wholesale dismissals of eminent persons who belonged to Walpole's own side but who, for one reason or another, were either against his scheme or had not been so enthusiastic about it as Walpole wanted them to be. Notable among the victims of his wrath on this occasion were Lord Chesterfield, Viscount Cobham, Dukes of Bolton and Montrose, Earls of Marchmont and Stair, and Lord Falmouth. These spectacular dismissals were followed, in April 1736, by that of

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1. Hervey, Memoirs, III, 705-19.

William Pitt, whose compliments to the King and his Ministers on the belated marriage of the Prince of Wales appeared so left-handed to Walpole that he decided to "muzzle" the Cornet of Horse then and there.[1]

Up to now I have been speaking only of that section of the Opposition which was 'created' by Walpole and which was variously known as the 'Old Whigs', the 'dissident Whigs', or simply as the malcontents, without saying a word about its main and older component, the Tories. The reason for this is provided by John Hervey, according to whom the struggle for power during Walpole's time (in fact it is true for the best part of the century) was mainly between the Whigs and the Whigs rather than between the Whigs and their old rivals, the Tories.[2] All the leading luminaries of the Opposition came from the ranks of the dissident Whigs; and it was they who formed the spearhead of its attacks on the Administration. The Tories, thrown into disarray by the events of 1715 (the Jacobite rising) and 1722 (the so-called Atterbury plot) which deprived them of effective leadership, were, even in late 1720's, very much a disorganized body, utterly incapable of doing any harm to Walpole's power. Furthermore, the establishment of the Hanoverian dynasty had split them into two distinct and mutually hostile groups: the one which readily recognized the validity of Hanoverian succession and became known

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1. Plumb, Chatham, p.13; Walpole's exact words were: 'We must muzzle this terrible cornet of the horse'. For Pitt's speech, see Hervey, Memoirs, 11, 553.

2. Hervey, 1, 6.

as 'Hanoverian Tories', and the other, called 'Jacobites', which did not, and which for years to come continued drinking the health of their lawful King, the King "over the water". The Hanoverian Tories were led by William Wyndham, an able man no doubt but one who always needed a prop to cut a figure in the House.[1] Whereas the other group, the Jacobite section, had its leader in "downright Shippen",[2] who though the most outspoken and fearless member of the House of Commons, was treated lightly and indulgently even by such a great enemy of the Jacobites as Walpole.[3] Besides the dissident Whigs, Hanoverian Tories and Jacobites, there were a few other smaller groups of independent members in the Parliament who owed allegiance to no political party but voted against the government whenever they found its policies contrary to their interests, or their idiosyncratic views.[4]

The task that Bolingbroke and Pulteney had set before themselves in 1726 was to bring these heterogeneous groups and factions closer and produce a unified Opposition party. This task was not

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1. Hervey, Memoirs, II, 529.
2. Pope, Sat. II.i.1.52 (Poems, IV, p.9).
3. Walpole actually had a great respect for Shippen; he once said of him, 'I will not say who is corrupt, but I will say who is not, and that is Shippen' (Coxe I, 757). According to John Timbs (A Century of Anecdotes, 1864, Vol.I, p.127) Walpole once sent some money to him as a gift, but Shippen refused to touch it. Frederick also had a similar experience when, pleased by a speech of Shippen, he offered him £1,000.
4. Plumb I, 145; Lord John Russell, in his Introduction to the Correspondence of John, Fourth Duke of Bedford (Lond. 1842) divides the Opposition into following groups: 1) Pulteney-

an easy one and, as will be seen later, they never fully succeeded in achieving it, but within weeks of their alliance they started claiming that such a party (called, according to the past traditions, the Country Party to denote that it stood for the Country or national interests, whereas the party in power represented the Court interest) had come into existence and was ready to challenge the faction which had engrossed all power and was making a mess of it. From the very beginning their approach was negative, as it had to be. They denounced each and every action and measure of Walpole. They accused him of having introduced pernicious elements into the body politic which, they urged, had to be weeded out immediately. What these elements were, were described and specified by the leaders of the Country party in their speeches delivered in the Parliament and in their political writings: in pamphlets and in the two journals, the Fog's Weekly and The Craftsman. They introduced Walpole as an unpatriotic, autocratic, selfish, mean and arrogant sole-minister who, acting unconstitutionally (the very office of 'sole' or 'prime' minister had no constitutional basis, so they argued), had impaired the balance established by the 1688 Revolution between the executive and legislative bodies of the country, increased the power of the Crown

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Carteret group, 2) The Cobham group, which included the 'Boy Patriots' or 'Cobham's Cubs', 3) Duke of Bedford-Lord Sandwich and their circle, 4) Chesterfield, Dodington, both of whom had 'their separate lances in the insurgent camp', 5) The Hanoverian Tories, who, in the House of Lords, were led by Bedford's father-in-law, Lord Gower, whose desertion of the Jacobites so angered Dr. Johnson that he had almost added his name to his definition of the word 'renegado' (Life, 1, 296, 544), and 6) the Jacobites. On the composition of the Opposition, see, also, Green, The Politics of Johnson, (6-7,8-12) and Foord, His Majesty's Opposition, (34-35, 117-128).

and usurped it for himself and, thus, had brought into being a form of government which though not exactly unprecedented (Mortimer, Wolsey, were only less ambitious fore-runners of his) was certainly quite alien to the national character. Besides encroaching upon the privileges of the people and the power of the Crown, they emphasized, he had created a barrier between the King and his subjects, made him completely unapproachable to them, and, what was more criminal, deprived him of their affection and reverence by executing arbitrary measures in his name. The King, thus, was no longer what he ought to be - the benign and affectionate head of a large family (that is, the entire nation) bestowing his favours without any discrimination or prejudice - but a virtual prisoner of his own minister who had hedged him from every side, placed his spies all around him and obliged him to see only through his (minister's) eyes and hear only through his ears. The people themselves were far from the happy, free people they used to be. Under the rule of this unscrupulous, wicked minister they had lost all their hard-won rights and prerogatives. The repeal of the Habeas Corpus Act, the introduction and retention of the Septennial Parliaments, the maintenance of a Standing Army, the corruption of the electorate, the buying off of their elected representatives, the increased taxes, the punitive measures against writers and printers were pointed out as nothing but so many curbs put on their liberties and properties and on their freedom of thought, speech and action. Concerned solely with feathering his own nest, he was accused of caring neither for the welfare of the people nor for the protection

and promotion of the national interest. Instead of that, they said, he was doing his best to pervert the taste of the people, to corrupt their heart and soul, to make them give up their inherent virtues and qualities, to persuade them to detest and discard their indigenous culture and values with a view to transform them from a virile, enterprising, proud and assertive nation into an effeminate and peevish one. His whole aim, they claimed, was to stifle the spirit of liberty and patriotism at home and lower the prestige of the nation abroad.

The panacea offered by the Opposition leaders for all these real or supposed national evils was a simple one - get rid of the Prime Minister, the evil genius of the country. The very removal of Walpole from the public life would restore that constitutional form of government which the Glorious Revolution - an achievement not of one party or the other but of the entire nation - had ushered in. The meaningless differences and distinctions between the Whigs and the Tories would disappear automatically since it was Walpole who had, for his sordid personal ends, kept them alive although the issues that divided the people were long dead. The political factional feuds would cease to exist, peace and prosperity would prevail over the land and people would regain their "liberties and properties". The ablest men of the country, now lying neglected, would be called upon to form an administration based not on corruption and oppression but on justice and equity. These men, being themselves true-born Englishmen and good patriots, would infuse the spirit of true patriotism into the heart of the

people and, at the same time, would take care of their interests both at home and abroad. Causes of friction and unrest gone, the whole nation would rally around these worthy men and give them its unqualified support in their efforts to get Britain back to its original place of prominence and honour among the powerful nations of the world. Even the King, constitutionally a limited monarch,[1] would have unlimited and unparalleled sway over the hearts of his loyal subjects once he was freed from the clutches of his vile counsellor. In short, the Opposition spokesmen claimed that the political death of Walpole would see the birth of a better, prosperous and powerful England, an England which the foreign powers would no longer find it easy to bully or by-pass.[2]

Walpole, then, was the demon the Opposition leaders were out to destroy in the interest (so they claimed) of the country and its people. They attacked him from all sides, employing a variety of tactics and a variety of weapons, not excluding the back-door intrigues and exploitation of the quarrels in the Royal household. Bolingbroke, himself debarred from active participation in the political activities, planned the strategies of Opposition attacks

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1. Later on Bolingbroke did confer unlimited powers on a 'patriotic' king, but that was chiefly meant to flatter Frederick and to detach him from Pulteney-Carteret group (Hessler, 78)

2. For these allegations and promises of the Opposition, see Pulteney's A Proper Reply to a Late Scurrilous Libel and An Answer to one Part of a Late Infamous Libel; Bolingbroke's 'Vision of Camilick' (Craftsman of 27.1.1929), Dissertation Upon Parties and the Idea of a Patriot King; The Craftsman for 10, 13, 20/2/1727, 24/6/1727, 24/2/1728, 14/6/1729, 28/3/1730, 22/5/1731, 29/4 and 19/8/1732 and 21/6/1733.

from his country-seat, the Dawley Farm, which had become the headquarters of the party.[1] To this place, resorted most of the Opposition leaders from time to time and imbibed his political philosophy, which they presented to the people as forcefully as their talents allowed. And, as we have seen earlier, there was no dearth of talent in the Opposition ranks, for besides the experienced parliamentarians and skilled debaters, it had the support of the best writers of the day - Swift, Pope, Gay, Thomson, Young, Mallet - who approved of its political programme and wished to see it translated into reality.

But despite this richness in talent, despite the valuable patronage of Frederick, the Prince of Wales,[2] and despite the popularity of its propaganda, the Opposition achieved no startling success against Walpole during the period under consideration and, indeed, for quite a few years afterwards. The reasons for its failure were very many, of which the lack of unity and understanding among its main components and their leaders was decidedly

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1. After Cobham's dismissal in June 1733, his house in Stowe became another rendezvous of the Opposition leaders (Wiggin, The Faction of Cousins, 3, 7, 52-55).

2. Frederick started associating with the Opposition soon after his arrival in England in 1729 (Hervey, Memoirs, 1, 97; Hessler, 71). Though just a figurehead, and used mostly as a tool by the factions within the Opposition, his patronage and nominal leadership of the party helped the other leaders of the party immensely as it protected them against the charge of being disloyal to the new dynasty. But with the exception of Bolingbroke - who saw in him, or hoped to see in him, the qualities worthy of a patriotic prince - very few persons in the Opposition had any genuine regard or respect for him (See Hervey, Memoirs, 1, 106, on Pulteney's uncharitable remarks on Frederick).

the most crucial. The jealousies, suspicions, and distrust which the Opposition leaders had against one another hardly ever allowed them to launch a concerted and well-co-ordinated move against their common enemy, the hatred for whom was the only lasting connecting link between them. How deep these jealousies and suspicions were, one can gather from their private correspondence[1] as well as from the observations made by their contemporaries; in particular from those of John, Lord Hervey who on one occasion had the following to say on the relationship subsisting between the two chief spokesmen of the Opposition in the House of Commons, Pulteney and Wyndham:

> Between Mr. Pulteney and Sir William Wyndham (the head of the Hanover Tories and his colleague in all public affairs) there was such a serious rivalry for reputation in oratory, interest with particulars, knowledge in business, popularity in the country, weight in Parliament, and the numbers of their followers, that the superior enmity they bore to men in power alone hindered that which they felt to one another from eclating [sic].[2]

That the things were equally bad between other leaders is borne out by another statement of Hervey:

> Lord Carteret and Lord Bolingbroke had no correspondence at all; Mr. Pulteney and Lord Bolingbroke hated one another; Lord Carteret and Pulteney were jealous of one another; Sir William Wyndham and Pulteney the same; whilst Lord Chesterfield had a little correspondence with them all, but was confided in by none of them.[3]

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1. See, for example, Lord Stair's letter to Lord Grange (dated 15.3.1736), Chesterfield's to Lyttelton (15.11.1737), to Lord Stair (3.12,1739) and to Dodington (8.9.1741) and Pope's to Lyttelton (1.11.1738).
2. Memoirs, 1, p.8.
3. Ibid., p.256.

This last comment of Hervey refers particularly to the poor performance of the Opposition in the concluding session of George II's first Parliament. But the picture which he has given here was true not just for the period January-March, 1734, but for all time, for the preceding years as well as for the succeeding ones. Right from the day of its inception the 'new' Opposition was divided on almost all the issues that it had to deal with. Whether it was the question of the increase in the Civil List,[1] or that of the election of the Scottish peers,[2] or the one concerning the reduction of the rate of interest on National Debts,[3] or that of Frederick's allowances,[4] or the one regarding the number of the pensioners and place-holders in the Parliament, there always was a difference of opinion among the Opposition members.[5] At best they could, occasionally, work out some tentative and 'ad hoc' agreements amongst themselves but they hardly survived the particular session of the Parliament

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1. Only Shippen opposed Walpole's suggestion to increase the Civil List in 1727; Pulteney, who had objected to the payment of the debts on the Civil List on earlier occasions, is reported to have offered a much larger sum to George II (Hervey, Memoirs, 1, 31).
2. See Hervey's letter dated February 10, 1735 to Henry Fox (Ilchester pp. 220-21) on Carteret's reluctance to support the petition against this election.
3. Hervey describes the personal considerations behind Pulteney's opposition to John Barnard's bill (Memoirs, 111, 730.)
4. For Pulteney and Carteret's opposition to raising the question of Frederick's allowances in the Parliament, see Hervey, Memoirs, 111, 667. Hervey also points out the interesting fact that Frederick's ardent supporters like Baltimore and Evelyn always sided with the Government in matters not concerned with his personal affairs (Memoirs, 111, 850-1).
5. Opposition was equally divided over Septennial Parliaments (Whigs in favour of it, Tories against - Hart, Bolingbroke, 67).

during which they were devised and it is interesting to note that even over Walpole's Excise Bill, which seemed to close their ranks, not all were willing to pursue the matter as far as some wanted to.

As regards the two main blocs of the Opposition party, the dissident Whigs and Hanoverian Tories, modern researchers have established the fact that the latter (who were considered so unworthy of trust by the dissident Whigs that they were never invited to their select gatherings at the Rumpsteak Club[1]) always entertained doubts and fears about the actual motives of the former and, for that reason, a majority of them preferred to remain neutral - if not actually hostile - on most of the crucial occasions.[2] These doubts and fears were not quite baseless. The fact that most of these dissident Whigs sat on the Opposition benches more by compulsion than by option was a well-known one; as was another: that some of them were not only carrying on underhand dealings with Walpole but actually receiving money from

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1. Foord 136; Plumb, Walpole, 11, 309.
2. One of these crucial occasions was when Sandys tabled his famous motion against Walpole. Thirty-two Tories belonging to Shippen's group abstained from voting and twenty-two voted against the motion (Foord, 139). The Tory attitude was summed up by Sir Charles Hanbury Williams in his 'A Political Eclogue (1740) from which the following lines are quoted:

   My principles to you I'll freely state,
   I love the Church, and Whiggism I hate;
   And tho', with you, Sir Robert I abhor,
   His Whiggish heart is what I hate him for,
   And if a Whig the minister must be,
   Pult'ney and Walpole are alike to me.
   (Ch. Hanb. Works, 1, 66).

   The speaker in this eclogue is Lord Lechmere and his silent auditor, George Lyttelton.

him.[1] They (the Tories) knew that Walpole's boast that he could make hundreds of 'patriots' was true, and so too was its converse. Their fear of being used merely as a "scaffolding" by the dissident Whigs for the second time - as they were in 1717-1719 by Walpole and Townshend - was, therefore, perfectly legitimate.[2] Among the dissident Whigs themselves there were some honest men who, believing as they sincerely did in the coalition of the parties and the formation of a national (instead of factional) government, shared the fears of the Tories and suspected, not without reason, that their cause, and the cause of their country, was being undermined by the duplicity of certain persons who outwardly belonged to their own side.[3] It was this discord and dissention within the Opposition that dimmed the chances of its success for a long time and made it comparable, in the eyes of the contemporaries, with the "three-headed cerberus",[4] with"Alexander's Captains"[5] and with a "rope of sand".[6]

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1. Hervey mentions Carteret's overtures to Walpole (Memoirs, 11, 705-719). For Walpole's secret dealings with some of the Opposition members, see Walpoliana (p.8) and William King's Anecdotes (pp.27-29).
2. This fear was expressed by Bolingbroke (Plumb, Walpole, 11, 310).
3. See page 163, note 1.
4. The Crafts of the Craftsmen, or, A Detection of the Designs of the Coalition (1735).
5. Hervey to the Princess Royal, dated 24.1.1735 (Ilchester, pp. 219-20).
6. This phrase occurs in the Free Briton of February 27, 1735; for a reference to this phrase and admission of its appropriateness, see Craftsman of March 8, 1735.

CHAPTER V

THE IMAGE OF THE OPPOSITION IN FIELDING'S PLAYS

Much against one's expectations, the picture that Fielding presents of the Opposition Party - his own Party, if some of the critics are to be believed - in his plays is not at all an attractive one. Amusing, eye-catching it is, but not attractive; for here, as in the case of Walpole, he has dealt exclusively with what appeared to him ridiculous in the Party and has ignored almost completely those aspects of it which, being more commendable and more presentable, could have enhanced its public image. Fielding points out these 'ridiculous' aspects in eight plays - in Love in Several Masques, The Temple Beau, The Author's Farce, The Tragedy of Tragedies, The Grub-Street Opera, Don Quixote in England, Pasquin and The Historical Register. I propose to deal with them in the following pages, but not according to the order in which they occur in the plays - for that will give a view of the picture only in bits and pieces - but according to the following classification:

i) The presence of the place-denied and place-hungry men in the Opposition Party;

ii) The personal basis of the animosity of its leaders for Walpole;

iii) The discrepancies in the pronouncements and actual conduct of its members;

iv) The effervescent public zeal of its 'patriots'.

i) The presence of the place-denied and place-hungry men in the Opposition party.

Fielding's awareness of the fact that the Opposition party comprised a considerable number of the politicians whose only grievance against Walpole was that they could not get (or retain) any place in his Administration is revealed to us in three early plays: in Love in Several Masques, where he concludes a scene between Wisemore and Malvil with a pithy couplet -

> Like a detracting courtier in disgrace,
> The wise will say, He only wants a place.[1]

in The Temple Beau, where he makes Lady Lucy confess -

> like the fiery partizans of state, we aim only at the same thing, by several ways: their aim is a place at court - ours is - this, my dear sister![2]

and, finally, in the following song of Owen in the Grub-Street Opera -

> The worn-out rake at pleasure rails,
> And cries, 'Tis all idle and fleeting;
> At court, the man whose int'rest fails,
> Cries, All is corruption and cheating.
> But would you know
> Whence both these flow?

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1. Works, 1, 148.
2. Ibid., 1, 188.

Tho' so much they pretend to abhor 'em,
That rails at court,
This at love's sport,
Because they are neither fit for 'em,
fit for 'em,
Because they are neither fit for 'em.[1]

In this song, as in the other two passages, the conduct of a vituperative 'courtier in disgrace' has been used for analogical purposes to illustrate, in one case, how the world interprets the vociferations of a discarded lover turned misogynist; in the other, the singleness of the object of pursuit of love-sick women; and, in the last, the absurdity of the belated moralizing zeal of an old, impotent rake. No doubt Fielding was presenting it as a universal truth, good for all time and applicable to all the ex-courtiers of every clime and country. But the sheer recurrence of this simile and the fact that Fielding was living in an age when every individual whose interest failed at the Court was instantaneously transmuted into a 'fiery partisan' would incline one to take these seemingly casual remarks as written purposely to reflect upon the motives and activities of those courtiers who, dismissed by Walpole, had made a common cause with his enemies. If so, then from the above passages two important conclusions can be drawn. First, that Fielding was still interpreting the current political hostilities in conventional terms,

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1. Works, II, 64.

that is to say, for him it was just a struggle between the persons 'in' office and the persons 'out' of office, the 'outs' trying to force the Administration to take them in by making themselves as great a nuisance to it as they possibly could. The second conclusion, the more important of the two, would be that Fielding, at this stage, was out of sympathy with the 'outs', believing that at least some of them, if not all, were rightly thrown out. How he came to change his views in this respect, and to what extent, need not be discussed here since these things have already been noticed in the Walpole chapters. But one point should be re-stated, which is that Fielding's angry comments, in his later plays, on Walpole's practice of removing place-holders somewhat huffishly were occasioned not by all the dismissals that he had ordered or engineered but by those of some eminent and respectable individuals whom Fielding really admired and revered, the individuals like the Earl of Chesterfield and William Pitt.

ii) <u>The personal animosity of Opposition leaders for Walpole</u>

The personal basis of the quarrel between Walpole and his leading adversaries, Bolingbroke and Pulteney in particular, is one of those well-known facts of British history which need no elaboration. As briefly described at the beginning of the last chapter, both Bolingbroke and Pulteney had some reason (very personal reason) to bear a grudge against Walpole. The ill-will and malice of the Opposition leaders towards Walpole, Fielding has tried to show in two plays, in the <u>Tragedy of Tragedies</u> and the

Grub-Street Opera. In each of these plays Fielding has, as seen earlier, heaped ridicule on Walpole in great abundance, but, at the same time, he has not spared Walpole's chief opponents. Indeed, far from sparing them he has made them cut a sorrier figure than Walpole. It is they, the Opposition leaders and not Walpole, who fare worse at his hands. This fact, quite a significant one, will become obvious in the following pages.

To take the Tragedy of Tragedies first, it has been noticed elsewhere that in this burlesque tragedy Tom Thumb's enemies are actually Walpole's enemies. One does not see very many of them. We are of course informed on more than one occasion that their number is fairly large,[1] but those whom we actually meet in the course of the play are just two, Foodle and Lord Grizzle. Foodle is a minor character and a few words should suffice for him. He, according to the information given in the Dramatis Personae, is "A Courtier that is out of place" and, consequently, a member of the "Party that is undermost". The part that he plays in the Tragedy of Tragedies is in keeping with this information. Being a courtier in disgrace, he has rallied around the arch rebel, Lord Grizzle, in the hope that their joint efforts will speed up Tom Thumb's downfall, which they both desire but fail to bring about and in the attempt lose their own lives. Who this man Foodle is, it is extremely difficult to establish. Whether he was meant by Fielding to represent any particular opponent of

1. Works, I, 499, 505.

Walpole, or any group of opponents, is not very clear. There is, however, some room for conjecture. Fielding's description of Foodle allows one to see in him the much persecuted faction of the deceased Sunderland and Stanhope, which in late 1720's and afterwards was definitely the "undermost" party in the country, and which, largely because of this persecution, had to form an alliance with the people who could be, with some justice, stigmatized as rebels and traitors. But the actual identity of Foodle is not a matter of any particular significance. Only one thing about him is worth noting - that he has joined the rebels not because of any ideological affinity with them but, simply, for the sake of expediency. He is with them because unlike Noodle and Doodle he has not been able to secure Tom's patronage. His animus for Tom Thumb is, therefore, both obvious and understandable, though he does not reveal it so blatantly as Grizzle does.

The identity of the leader of the malcontents, or rebels, Lord Grizzle, however, requires no exceptional penetration on our part to be fully discovered. The phrases used for him and the utterances made by him provide sufficient clues to that. On the basis of these phrases and utterance, it can be safely conjectured that Lord Grizzle in the Tragedy of Tragedies represents Henry Saint John, better known as Lord Bolingbroke, whose reciprocal hatred for Walpole has been traced by Walpole's son as far back as their Eton days.[1] During Walpole's regime the only man who

1. Horace Walpole, Memoirs, Vol.1, p.195; see also Horace's rather impartial comparison of Walpole and Bolingbroke's characters in his Reminisences, pp.220-226.

was being branded as "Mountain of treason" by some and adored as a "champion of Liberty" by others at one and the same time, the man who did underrate Walpole's capabilities and services to the country and tried, in a way, to rouse people against him,[1] was this talented but somewhat erratic statesman, the one time popular Secretary of State of Queen Anne and the infamous Prime Minister of the exiled Pretender, who only recently had been allowed, much against his rival's will, to return to the country of his birth.[2] The most important piece of evidence regarding Grizzle's identity lies, in my opinion, in his famous pathetic soliloquy:

> Where art thou, Grizzle! where are now thy glories?
> Where are the drums that waken thee to honour?
> Greatness is a lac'd coat from Monmouth-street,
> Which fortune lends us for a day to wear,
> To-morrow puts it on another's back.
> The spiteful sun but yesterday survey'd
> His rival high as Saint Paul's cupola;
> Now may he see me as Fleet-ditch laid low.[3]

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1. Works, 1, pp. 499, 505.
2. Realey, 167-75. Coxe, in his biography of Horatio Walpole, gives the reason why Walpole opposed Bolingbroke's pardon (Coxe, Lord Walpole, [Lond. 1802] pp.70-71). Incidentally, the Jacobites, too, were against Bolingbroke's being granted full pardon as they detested him for deserting the Pretender.
3. Works, 1, 471.

This soliloquy of Grizzle, substantially altered from the one in Tom Thumb,[1] sums up the dejection and despair of Bolingbroke (which he shared with his close friends) caused by the sudden and quite unexpected turn of events in the summer of 1727 - the death of George I and re-instatement of Walpole as Prime Minister by George II. "But yesterday" his prospects of gaining a victory over his rival were indeed very rosy. Towards the close of George I's reign he had ingratiated himself with the late King's mistress, Duchess of Kendal, to such a great extent that he had become hopeful not only of obtaining full pardon from the King (which would have enabled him to sit in the Lords) but of replacing Walpole as well.[2] The death of George Louis, therefore, was a big blow to him. But still not all was lost and for quite some time his hopes and expectations had remained considerably high. And this for two reasons; first, he knew that George II had never been kindly disposed towards Walpole and his colleagues; and second, he believed that the cordial relations of his close friends (Swift, Pope, Gay in particular) with the mistress of the

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1. Grizzle's soliloquy in Tom Thumb reads as follows:

> See how the cringing Coxcombs fawn upon him!
> The Sunshine of a Court can, in a Day,
> Ripen the vilest Insect to an Eagle:
> And ev'ry little Wretch, who but an Hour
> Before had scorn'd, and trod him under Feet,
> Shall lift his Eyes aloft, to gaze at distance,
> And flatter what they soorn'd.

Woods rightly suggests (p.102-103) that this passage refers to the changes in the attitude of the courtiers towards Walpole on the arrival of the news of the death of George I and after his reinstatement by George II.

2. Walter Sichel, Bolingbroke and his Times: The Sequel, (Lond. 1902), 266-67.

new King, Henrietta Howard, Countess of Suffolk, would stand him in good stead. But the facts turned out to be otherwise. Instead of the good-natured Countess, it was the shrewd and crafty Caroline who exercised greater influence over George Augustus; and she saw to it that Walpole was re-appointed as the head of the administration. This event virtually sealed the fate of Bolingbroke, who now had little else to do but to start flinging mud at his more fortunate rival from the 'Fleet-ditch' of gloom, despair and spite.

Grizzle's speech reveals sufficiently Bolingbroke's animosity for Walpole. But to find out how deep-rooted it was and how eager it had made Bolingbroke to destroy Walpole's power, one has to turn to the next scene where Grizzle makes this declaration -

> I'll swim through seas; I'll ride upon the clouds;
> I'll dig the earth; I'll blow out ev'ry fire;
> I'll rave; I'll rant; I'll rise; I'll rush; I'll roar;
> . . . . . .
> I'll tear the scoundrel into twenty pieces.[1]

Those who are familiar with Bolingbroke's malevolence towards Walpole and with his slashing, unsparing attacks on him will find little difficulty in recognizing the fairness of the account here

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1. Works I, 473; at a later stage (p.502) Grizzle is shown demanding Tom's life. This could be interpreted as an indirect allusion to the memorandum submitted by Bolingbroke to George II enumerating Walpole's misdeeds. For this event, see Oliver I, 396.

given by Fielding notwithstanding the fact that Fielding's primary aim in the above lines (as throughout the play) was to burlesque the "ridiculous rant and nonsense" of the tragedians like Edward Young.[1] That this malevolence will hasten his own destruction was perhaps not realized by Bolingbroke until 1735,[2] but to a man like Fielding, who could assess the political scene more objectively, it was as foreseeable in 1730-31 as the ultimate doom of Walpole himself, who in the play (as in real life) triumphs over his antagonist only to be undone by far superior forces.[3]

The account of Pulteney's quarrel with Walpole, as given in the Grub-Street Opera, is, however, much more accurate than that of Bolingbroke's. There is nothing ambiguous about it since every aspect of this quarrel is described in detail and linked directly with the events which had happened in the recent months; in particular, with the paper war between the two antagonists (and their supporters) and its repercussions. These events need to be briefly narrated here.

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1. Hillhouse, Tragedy of Tragedies, pp.164-5.
2. Bolingbroke left England in June 1735, after Walpole's most ferocious attacks on him in the House of Commons. In November of the same year he wrote to Wyndham:

   > My part is over, and he who remains on the stage after his part is over deserves to be hissed off ...

3. Works, 1, 508.

Some time early in January 1731 there was published a ministerial pamphlet entitled Sedition and Defamation Display'd which contained very severe attacks on the 'patrons' of the Craftsman, to whom it was ironically dedicated. Pulteney was one of the two unnamed patrons (the other was Bolingbroke) who, feeling particularly hurt by its provocative language, came out, within a few days, with a retaliatory pamphlet called A Proper Reply to a Late Scurrilous LIBEL, Entitled, Sedition and Defamation Display'd. In this pamphlet of twenty odd pages Pulteney defended his political views, justified his opposition to Walpole and expressed his loyalty to and affection for the Royal family. But he did not stop at that. Giving full rein to his anger, he descended to personalities and ridiculed both Walpole and the "delicate Hermaphrodite", "pretty, little, Master-Miss",[1] John Hervey, Walpole's stooge and supposed author of the earlier pamphlet.[2] Hervey, despite his previous friendship with Pulteney, found these phrases a bit too stinging to remain silent and, accordingly, he peremptorily demanded that Pulteney should either deny he had any hand in this pamphlet or

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1. These phrases, referring to Hervey's feminine appearance and manners, were utilized by Pope in more than one poem, particularly in the First and Second Satires of the Second Book of Horace and Epistle to Arbuthnot (Pope, Poems, vol.IV, pp. 5, 61, 107). Painful though Pulteney's phrases were they referred to a fact which was admitted by Hervey's friend and collaborator, Lady Mary W. Montagu, when she divided human race into three categories - 'Men, Women and Herveys' (Works, [1893], 1, 95).

2. The author of this pamphlet was Sir William Yonge; Hervey had only assisted in its publication. (See Sedgwick's Introduction to Hervey's Memoirs, 1, XXVII).

give satisfaction. Facts being what they were, Pulteney had no option but to choose reluctantly the second and more honourable alternative, especially when he found that his ambiguous and evasive reply to Hervey had failed to mollify him. As a consequence, he and Hervey fought a duel in the Upper St. James's Park, on January 25, 1731, in which Hervey just managed to vindicate his honour without establishing any reputation for swordsmanship. The duel was more or less a bloodless affair but, still, it was the most sensational event of its kind since the days of Lord Mohun. Numberless pamphlets, ballads, and cartoons were produced celebrating this encounter and in all of them Walpole was held out as the villain of the piece. There is no evidence whatsoever regarding Walpole's complicity in it, but Pulteney himself was more than convinced that the duel was engineered by him. As a result of this conviction - which he had carried with him to the St. James's Park on the fateful day - he forgave, and sought forgiveness of, Hervey but grew more and more acrimonious towards Walpole.[1] A few months later he was again attacked by the ministerial journalists in a pamphlet called Remarks on the Craftsman's Vindication of his two honourable Patrons.[2] This provided Pulteney with an opportunity to cast much more serious aspersions upon Walpole than he had done

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1. Hervey, Memoirs, 1, XXIX.
2. The 'Vindication' of Bolingbroke and Pulteney had appeared in the Craftsman of May 22, 1731.

previously. In his Answer[1] to the above pamphlet he expressed his solemn determination of not only bringing about Walpole's downfall but also of delivering him up "to the justice of his country".[2] This pamphlet contained Pulteney's harshest criticism of Walpole's "wicked" administration and it was indeed so strongly worded and so full of little details of Walpole's "curious Secret History",[3] that the outraged premier felt obliged to have recourse to punitive measures. And this he did immediately. He got the printer of the offensive pamphlet arrested and Pulteney removed from the minor offices that he still held.[4]

These hectic political and Grubean activities of the first half of 1731 provided an excuse, and temptation as well, to Fielding to revise, enlarge and re-name his Welsh Opera which already contained a good many allusions of political nature. Most of the amusing aspects and details of this war of verbal reproaches and recriminations Fielding has parodied in the Grub-Street Opera. Pulteney's implacable hatred for Walpole, his allegations regarding Walpole's malpractices, his unsparing

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1. The full title of this pamphlet is An Answer to one Part of a Late Infamous Libel, Intitled [sic], Remarks on the Craftsman's Vindication of his two honourable Patrons.
2. An Answer, p.48.
3. Ibid., p.43.
4. Pulteney was removed from the Privy Council and Commission of the Peace in June 1731.

criticism of his policies, his indecorous references to Walpole's private life, his refusal to serve under him and his resolution to bring him to book, as expressed in his aforementioned pamphlets and in certain numbers of the Craftsman, as well as the charges levelled against him by the ministerial writers find an exact parallel - with a touch of burlesque - in the altercative or "scolding" scenes between William and Robin. These altercations (which are nothing but endless and artless variations upon "two little words - you lie") contain, according to Fielding, all the wit that had flourished among the "political members" - some of whom wore ribbands and some rags - of the Grubean Society for "a long while".[1] They are first heard of in the third and fourth scenes of the second act which show William and Robin meeting at an appointed place - "A Field" - for the purpose of fighting a duel. But this duel, despite the stirring martial tune of "Britons strike home", is fought with words, for the two combatants, the moment they come face to face, start rapping out "the lie" at each other, forgetting utterly their rapiers.[2] In this encounter William, however, finds an opportunity

1. The Grub-Street Opera, Introduction (Works 11, 55-56.)
2. This duel, as stated earlier, is a burlesque of the equally harmless one (speaking physically) fought between Pulteney and John Hervey. In making Walpole a substitute of Hervey, Fielding was not only aiming at 'greater dramatic effect', as Cross suggests (1, 107), but also taking due cognizance of the sentiments of that section of the public (it included Pulteney as well) which had felt shocked at the villainy of "Iago" (Walpole) in using poor 'Roderigo' (Hervey) as his catspaw. (See Iago Display'd [Lond. 1731], Pulteney's An Answer to one Part [1731], p.61 , Prints and Drawings [B.M.] Vol.11, Nos.1867-8 , and Political Ballads, 46-8).

to declare what he proposes to do with Robin. He warns him --

> Sirrah, I'll make you repent you ever quarrell'd with me -- I will tell my master of two silver spoons you stole -- I'll discover your tricks -- your selling of glasses, and pretending the frost broke them -- making master brew more beer than he needed, and then giving it away to your own family; especially to feed the great swoln [sic] belly of that fat-gutted brother of yours -- who gets drunk twice a-day at master's expense ... then there's your filing the plate, and when it was found lighter, pretended that it wasted in cleaning; and your bills for tutty and rotten stone, when you us'd nothing but poor whiting. Sirrah, you have been such a rogue, that you have stole above half my master's plate, and spoil'd the rest.[1]

The "spoons", "glasses" and "plates" of course refer to the "Secretary's plates" which had figured rather prominently in one of Pulteney's pamphlets.[2] The "beer" which is brewed in excessive quantities to meet the extravagant needs not of the master but of Robin's family, particularly of his brother,[3] and of his patroness,[4] Lady Apshinken, stands, presumably, for the increased civil list (which meant increase in taxation) offered by Walpole to George II, a considerable part of which was earmarked for Caroline. Walpole's share in it and that of Horace

1. Works II, pp.89-90.
2. An Answer, pp.23-24.
3. Horatio Walpole is called 'a Buffoon' in Pulteney's A Proper Reply and characterized as a 'saucy, ill-bred, noisy scurrilous, obscene ...' person (p.5.).
4. Works, II, p.93.

Walpole, the then Cofferer of the Household, must have been, so it was thought, much more than the specified amounts of their respective salaries.

William's arraignment of Robin does not end with the charges of felony, embezzlement and nepotism. After criticising him on these scores he proceeds to pass caustic remarks on his mistresses, his pacifism, his "secret services" and then to his claim regarding his concern for the tenants of his master which for William is absolutely untenable. For, so he argues, had Robin's concern for them been as genuine as he claims, he "would not be always making master so hard upon them in every court; and prevent him giving them the fat ox at Christmas, on pretence of good husbandry."[1] Though brief, the significance of this last statement of William cannot be over-emphasized as it embodies one of the most recurring themes of Opposition propaganda, namely, that it was not the Opposition leaders or "Patriots" who were acting as "incendiaries" and sowing seeds of disaffection and sedition in the minds of the people but Walpole himself who, endeavouring "to divert the general Hatred of the People from himself" was "putting his Master upon Measures which naturally tend to alienate their Affections."[2] The reason why such statements were made so often by the Opposition spokesmen is quite plain. They had two

1. Works, II, 92.
2. A Proper Reply, p.5.

considerations in their mind: first, to show their regard and respect for the King; and second, to bring home to him the folly of retaining a Minister who having himself forfeited the confidence of the people was liable to render his master equally unpopular with his loyal and devoted subjects. How little respect the Opposition leaders (or for that matter, the entire nation, including Walpole) actually had for the King and how little conviction their charges and arguments (against Walpole) carried with the King are not the points worthy of any discussion at this stage. Let us turn to the William-Robin affair once again.

William's accusation of Robin leads him (Robin) and his supporters (William himself is almost friendless; except for Margery, none of Sir Apshinken's servants is favourably inclined towards him[1]) to probe and question William's motives

1. John has a few nice words to say about William (Works II, 74) but he is closer to Robin than to him. Whereas Susan, who is supposed to be in love with William and who does show some concern for him in the last scene, remains more or less neutral. She cautions William against quarrelling with Robin and reporting his misdeeds to the master, and once she even loses her temper when William rejects her offer to mediate between him and Robin (Works II, pp.88-93), but she does not take any side. Susan, therefore, cannot be identified with Pulteney's wife. Nor can she be taken as one representing Pulteney's mistress, for Pulteney never had any mistress (hence, probably, John's strange observation -- 'Our William who us'd to rail against women and matrimony' Works II, p.74). In Margery Fielding seems to have blended together two important women around the Court -- Molly Lepel, John Hervey's wife, who was 'prejudiced against [Walpole] from what William [Pulteney]' used to say'(Works II, 67) and Miss Vane, Hervey's mistress, whom Frederick had won over (see Works, II, p.117, where Margery shows her willingness to allow some liberties to Owen provided his 'Mamma' gives him 'a large allowance').

as well. According to them, they are nothing but selfish, based wholly on personal considerations. They regard him as an extremely ambitious man who just cannot see anyone holding a superior position. He hates Robin simply on account of his being more fortunately placed than he himself is and not because (as William claims) Robin indulges in questionable practices. He abuses Robin, plots against him, tries to poison the ears of the master against him for no other reason than that he covets his place. He, too, wants to feather his nest as Robin does but he knows that so long as Robin remains supreme he will not be able to do so to his heart's content. Hence his resolve not to live in the same house with Robin;[1] hence, also, his impatience to see Robin turned out. Because he is so motivated, whatever he says about Robin is not to be believed in; it is "all malice", pure and unadulterated, and nothing else.[2] This malice, together with his jealousy, avarice, impetuosity and recklessness -- which are the chief ingredients of his nature -- has rendered William an utterly irresponsible and unreliable person, worthy neither of replacing Robin nor of retaining the place he at present holds. "It is", we are confidently told, "but a word and a blow"[3] with him and he will stick at nothing

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1. Works II, pp.89,91-92; see Craftsman of May 22, 1731, in which it is said about Pulteney that he will never accept a place at the Court.

2. Works, II, p.67.

3. Ibid, p.92.
   Sir Charles Hanbury-Williams, Fielding's friend, seems to have borrowed this phrase from Fielding. In his sequal to An Ode Humbly Inscribed to the Right Honourable William Earl of Bath (Nov. 1742) called A Newer Ode than the Last he gives the following character-sketch of Pulteney:

to "set the whole parish together by the ears".[1] To such a man the peace and security of the parish and its inhabitants cannot be trusted. Nor can he be relied upon for the safety of the lives of the master and mistress. For it is well-known, fire-eating, "head strong devil" that he is, he (as a coachman) is extremely fond of "driving to[an]inch". Because of this tendency it is quite likely that he will "overturn the coach one day or other, and break both master and mistress's necks".[2]

The above observations on Pulteney, culled faithfully from the ministerial writings, leave one in no doubt about Fielding's desire to remain impartial in ridiculing the two great public figures of the day. Impressed neither by the high-sounding declamations of Pulteney nor by the argumentations of Walpole and his hacks, he seems to have been convinced that bad as the one was in intentions and the other in actions there

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'Tis true you are
A Man of War,
Of Courage stout and try'd;
It was, we know,
But word and blow,
When honour seem'd your guide.

(Works [1822] Vol.I, p.203).

1. Works, II, p.92.

2. Works, II, 92.
The apprehensions here expressed had their origin in a letter of one called 'Colonel Platoon' who had expressed his opinion that Pulteney was not a wise coachman as he drove his Master within an 'Inch of a Precipice'. I have not been able to trace this letter, but excerpts from it were reproduced in Caleb's reply to Col. Platoon (Craftsman, 6 January 1728). The 'Coachman' simile was mostly used for Walpole (see p. 63) but occasionally it was applied to Pulteney and other Opposition leaders as well (See, for example, the phrase, 'the old Coachman' used by Charles Hanbury-Williams for Pulteney, Ilchester, Charles Hanbury-Williams, p.117).

was not much to choose between the two. In other words, he shared the views of another contemporary of his who held that --

> P[ulteney]'s the W[alpol]e of a yesterday,
> And wou'd be a W[alpol]e still if once in Play.[1]

Susan's remarks on fellow servants and Puzzletext's inability to determine who was a greater rogue between William and Robin give exactly the same impression.[2] This seems to have been an abiding conviction with Fielding, developed and expressed more fully in the third chapter of the fourth book of Jonathan Wild. But, still, there is some reason to believe that Fielding, at least at this stage (summer 1731), was a bit more favourably disposed towards Walpole than Pulteney. In evidence for this I would refer not so particularly either to Sweetissa's seemingly defensive-cum-adulatory statements like --

> O Margery, Margery! an upper servant's honesty is never so conspicuous, as when he is abused by the under-servants. -- They must rail at some one, and if they abuse him, he preserves his master and mistress from abuse.

and

> if all my master's ancestors had met with as good servants as Robin, he had enjoyed a better estate

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1. The Satirists: A Satire. The date assigned to this anonymous poem in the B.M. Catalogue is 1710, but it is a much later publication.
2. Works, 11, 90-91, 121.

than he had now.[1]

or to Robin's claim that --

> I shall give a better account [of the plates] than William would, had he been butler as long as I have.[2]

but to Robin's home thrust --

> I have not so bad an opinion of myself as to be jealous of you, however sensible you may be of your own merits.

in answer to William's statement that being conscious of "his own demerits", Robin was "jealous of every man he sees for a rival".[3] Puzzletext's mockery of William's cheap pun on

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1. Works, 11, 67, 68.
   In these statements of Sweetissa, which did not figure in the Welsh Opera, some critics have seen an attempt on the part of Fielding to mollify Walpole. But I do not believe that they were meant to serve any such purpose. In the first statement Fielding undoubtedly was ridiculing that type of pseudo-ratiocination which was very popular with Walpole's apologists, namely, that the more a minister is condemned and criticised by his opponents the more talented he should be deemed. To mention only two instances, this argument was used by 'the Adventurer in Politics' in the Daily Gazetteer of May 7, 1737, and by Colley Cibber in his Apology. With Walpole in mind, Cibber said:
   > I can hardly forbear thinking that they who have been longest rail'd at must, from that circumstance, shew, in some sort, a proof of capacity. (Apology, pp.37-38).

   It is to be remembered that this passage was particularly noticed by the author of Theophilus Cibber's spurious Apology (1740, 27-28). 'Adventurer's' claim also was not allowed to go unnoticed; Fielding himself made fun of it in his 'Pasquin' letter published in Common Sense of May 21, 1737.
   The other observation of Sweetissa is out and out ironical. If examined carefully it would mean that had there been ministers like Walpole in the past, the power of the Crown would have been absolute, not limited - an allegation often made by Walpole's critics.
2. Works, 11, 109.
3. Works, 11, 120.
   Robin's retort is probably based upon an event which took place some time in 1721. During a debate in the Commons, Walpole, answering Pulteney's criticism of his administration, had tauntingly offered to vacate his place in favour of so talented a man as Mr. Pulteney (Realey, 164).

Robin's name, which earns him Robin's gratitude, is also not without significance.[1] This pun was to be the last shot in William's locker but it acted like a boomerang and hurt William more than his adversary. The mere fact that towards the close of the play William is rendered utterly humiliated and speechless unmistakably indicates Fielding's wish to make it clear to his audience and readers that, when all was said and done, William did not deserve to be left on a par with Walpole.[2]

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1. Works, ll, 121.
   Pulteney's actual pun on 'Robin' has already been mentioned on page 43 . Another argument somewhat favourable to Robin is to be found in Air LX (Works, ll, 121).

2. Certain other incidents related to the Walpole-Pulteney quarrel that Fielding has alluded to are here briefly described:
   (i) Pulteney's ambiguous reply to Hervey's inquiry regarding the authorship of A Proper Reply, which finds a parallel in William's answer -- 'I don't think it worth my while to tell you whether it is or no' -- to Robin's inquiry whether the anonymous letter to Sweetissa was not written by him (Works, ll, 91).
   (ii) Walpole's unsuccessful attempt to conciliate Pulteney by offering him Townshend's place through Caroline (for this, see Coxe, Walpole, lll, 35 and Foord, p.123). This event is glanced at in William's refusal to have a female mediator (Works, ll, 93).
   (iii) Removal of Pulteney from the Privy Council and Commission of Peace in June 1731. An allusion to this incident is found in Robin's threat to William -- 'while you are attempting my place, you may lose your own' (Works, ll, 91). It is interesting to note that in the Welsh Opera, which was written before Pulteney had lost the two offices, this threat is delivered by William.
   (iv) The developing friendship between Pulteney and Frederick, which is indirectly pointed out in Sweetissa's allegation that William had sold 'a pair of buckles' to Owen (Works, ll, 120).

Fielding's interpretation of the Walpole-Pulteney quarrel in Grub-Street Opera is a superficial and conventional one. As he emphasizes the personal basis of it, it is more a relation of facts than an interpretation. He had intended to give a different and somewhat original and illuminating interpretation, but when he came to publish the final version of the play he, for reasons unknown, dropped the idea. However, some insight into what he actually thought about this quarrel can still be had from the imperfect version of the play published (as the 'Genuine' edition of the Grub-Street Opera) for the "Benefit of the Comedians of the New Theatre".[1] In the opening scene of the 'Genuine' Grub-Street Opera occurs the following interesting dialogue between the author, Scriblerus, and the Master of the Playhouse:[2]

Scriblerus: ... But, alas! you mistake Altercation or Scolding a little in Jest, for quarrelling in Earnest - Sir, was you ever at Westminster Hall?

Master: Often, Sir.

Scriblerus: Did you ever hear our People scold there?

Master: I have heard the Lawyers.

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1. From the title page of the 'Genuine' edition. C.B. Woods (p.194) and J.R. Brown ('Fielding's Grub-Street Opera', MLQ, XVI [1955], 32-41) suggest the possibility of its being a pirated edition. Woods also suggests (p.205) that the 'Genuine' edition represents incomplete stage of revision of the Welsh Opera. In Prof. Woods' opinion the Grub-Street Opera itself was not published before 1750 (Edgar V. Roberts, 'Mr. Seedo's London Career and Work with Henry Fielding', PQ XLV [1966], 179-90)

2. In Welsh Opera, as in Grub-Street Opera, the dialogue is between Scriblerus and 'a Player'.

Scriblerus: The Lawyers! Why those are our People; there hath long been the strictest Union between Grubstreet and the Law; thus our Politicians are as good Friends as our Lawyers, behind the Curtain; they scold and abuse one another in the Person of their Masters and Clients, and then very friendly get drunk together over their Booty - Our People no more quarrel in Earnest, than they quarrel with Civility ... Why, Sir, you might as well suppose Robin and Will in my Opera, to be in Earnest.

Master: Why, Faith, they abuse one another so heartily that I scarce knew, at Rehearsal, whether they were in Earnest or in Jest.

This dialogue is of considerable importance. Fielding's suggestion that Robin and William were not actually two enemies seeking each others annihilation but two accomplices putting up a sham fight for mutual benefit deserves our full attention. And that not simply because it is novel but because it points to an intriguing and lesser known aspect of Pulteney-Walpole relationship.[1] This suggestion, or suspicion, establishes

1. Works, IV, 182-4.
According to Coxe there always was a certain amount of intimacy between Pulteney and Walpole. He not only sat with Walpole on the Treasury benches and spoke amicably with him but also sought offices for his men from him (Coxe, Walpole, I, 365; III, 321). Hence it was that the rumour regarding his willingness to come to terms with Walpole continued to

a direct link between Grub-Street Opera ('Genuine') and Jonathan Wild's declamation on 'Hats' and allows one to conclude that Fielding's distrust of Pulteney and his group, which he expressed again in Pasquin and Historical Register,[1] was not a product of the later years of disenchantment. It was as old as Fielding's interest in contemporary politics.

iii. The discrepancies in the pronouncements and actual conduct of the Opposition members.

One particular aspect of the Opposition Party which seems to have remained uppermost in Fielding's mind all the time was the yawning gap between the pompous pronouncements and professions of its spokesmen and their actual malpractices. Almost all the allusions and instances noticed above touch upon this ridiculous feature in one way or other. There, though Fielding does not use very many words to spell it, his meaning remains perfectly intelligible; which is that whether it is Grizzle fighting Tom for the cause of 'Liberty' or William quarrelling with Robin on the ground of his improbity, or the disgraced courtier declaiming on the corruption at Court, the bona-fides of these self-righteous, public-spirited persons cannot be considered unquestionable. A fuller and more clear

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persist throughout Pulteney's days in the Opposition, from 1725 to 1742. For this rumour, see A Dialogue Between the Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Walpole And William Poultney [sic] Esq. (the date given in the B.M. Catalogue is 1721, but it is incorrect since this dialogue contains a reference to the Craftsman), James Mitchell's 'A Dialogue Between the Rt. Hon. A and B' (in his Poems on Several Occasions, 1729, Vol.II, 349-51) and Lady Mary W. Montagu's 'The Ninth Ode of the Third Book of Horace Imitated' (Letters, III, 420-21).

1. See the couplet on 'trifling' honours and the reference to the reconciliation between the rival candidates in Pasquin and the patriot scene in the Historical Register (Works II, 290,299 and 374-5).

exposition of this point is, however, to be found in Fielding's later plays, specially in Don Quixote in England and Pasquin, where he shows the members of the Country Party railing at the nefarious conduct of their rivals, (that is, the courtiers) and yet emulating them in their vices sedulously and shamelessly at one and the same time.

In Don Quixote in England there is very little of party politics as its three "political" scenes deal not with the impending tussle between the two parties and their respective candidates but with the venality of the electorate. But it is significant to note that the only candidate who is mentioned in these scenes and who appears in person later on belongs to the Country Party. He is Sir Thomas Loveland, euphemistically called "the knight of the Long Purse".[1] From this appellation and from what is said by him and about him elsewhere some useful information can be gathered with regard to his political morality. Sir Loveland, a "good-natured, civil ... gentleman",[2] is a country squire (hence a Tory) seeking election to the Parliament from that very borough from which he had stood in the earlier election. Whether he was chosen by the electorate on that occasion or not is not very certain, but about one thing there is absolutely no doubt: that notwithstanding the denunciation of corruption and bribery by his party, he had shown no scruples in making as full

1. Works III, p.87.
2. Ibid, 88.

and improper use of his "Long Purse" as he could. Among the people he had at that time tried to bribe and win over was the innkeeper, Guzzle, to whose wife he had given "two bobs", which she still "wears in her ears" and which constitute the only article of jewellery in the Guzzle household.[1] His prospects in the coming election appear to be fairly bright, for besides the commitment of the Corporation (which, however, is not absolute) there is no rival in sight.[2] But Sir Loveland is a shrewd man; he does not believe in taking any chances. Hence it is that he has started his election campaign well before the polling day. And that too at a very hectic pace. He keeps, so we are told, six hundred free-holders constantly in his company and spends his wealth on them lavishly, providing free treats (which include "four or five bottles" per head per tavern) to them wherever he takes them.[3] He is particularly kind to men like Guzzle, who, being not as "sound at the bottom" as Sir Loveland would like, have to be kept in good humour at least "till after the next election."[4]

This is all that can be gathered about Sir Loveland's political, election-time activities from the play. The account admittedly is brief and sketchy. On the basis of this scanty information it would seem rather unjust to build a case against

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1. Ibid., 75.
2. Works., III, 81.
3. Ibid., 88. The allusion is probably to Viscount William Vane (a Country party candidate) who stood for the Kentish borough of Maidstone. He had started giving election feasts as early as September 1733 (See Grub-Street Journal for 20.9.1733, 8.11.1733 and 10.1.1734.)
4. Ibid., 109.

him. Furthermore, it would seem equally unjust to stigmatize him as a political hypocrite, for, as represented in the play, Sir Loveland appears to be totally un-encumbered with moral pretensions with regard to public life. He delivers no harangue to the electorate on public morality and exhibits no antipathy for the bribery and corruption of the courtiers (one reason for this may be the absence of a Court candidate). But these facts do not obliterate the most important fact, namely, that his conduct is very much at variance with the principles and standards preached and prescribed by his Party. In referring to Sir Loveland's uncommendable dealings with the electorate Fielding's chief aim seems to have been to emphasize this contrast. For people so removed in time as we are it may indeed be a bit tedious to grasp Fielding's true meaning and compare Sir Loveland's electioneering methods with the high-sounding utterances of his party-leaders; but his own contemporaries, the people for whose instruction and entertainment these scenes were especially added, probably faced no difficulty in this respect.

In Pasquin, however, there is no such difficulty to be encountered even by present-day readers of the play, for here the representatives (who undoubtedly hold very high places in the hierarchy of their party) of the Country Party are shown both preaching what they never practised and practising what they always condemned - in others. They are Sir Henry Fox-Chace

and Squire Tankard,[1] the two candidates nominated by the Country Party for election to the Parliament from a dual constituency. Sir Henry and Squire Tankard (like Sir Loveland in Don Quixote) both belong to the place they are standing from and have a reputation for honesty, incorruptibility as well as for hospitality.[2] These qualities and the fact that they are "neighbours" should have stood them in good stead with the aldermen and the electorate. But they do not.[3] Coming at the heels of their counterparts and rivals, Lord Place and Col. Promise, they find Mr. Mayor and his brother aldermen in a somewhat hostile mood. They (actually it is Sir Henry who, like Lord Place, does all the speaking for his Party) propose a toast to "liberty and property, and no excise" but to no purpose. Mr. Mayor and the aldermen will have no "party health". Their refusal, however, comes neither as a surprise to Sir Henry - at whose place they have been eating and drinking "at least twenty times in a twelve-month"[4]- nor as an irritant. Instead of being put off by it, he, divining correctly the reason behind it, proceeds to deliver a political sermon:

> I begin to smoke you; your pulses have been felt I perceive; and will you be bribed to sell your country? Where do you think these courtiers get the money they

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1. These gentlemen are no strangers to us; Miss Lucy mentions them (in no complimentary way) during her conversation with her father in An Old Man Taught Wisdom (Works III, p.134)
2. Works, III, 268.
3. Ibid., 268.
4. Ibid., 268.

> bribe you with, but from you yourselves? Do you think a man, who will give a bribe, won't take one? If you would be served faithfully, you must choose faithfully; and give your vote on no consideration but merit: for my part, I would as soon suborn an evidence at an assize, as a vote at an election.[1]

This, indeed, is an excellent and impressive piece of argumentation carrying as it does not just a grain but, rather, a bushel of truth. And it is perfectly in line with the official propaganda of Sir Henry's party, containing its catch-phrases and themes. A preamble of this nature leads one to expect that Sir Henry's subsequent conduct too would be in line with it. But it is not. The methods and tactics which he employes to woo the aldermen and Mr. Mayor differ with those of his rivals only in appearance and, thus, make it crystal clear that he did not mean his condemnation of bribery and corruption to be taken seriously. In actuality he is averse neither to one nor to the other, and appeals to the venal instincts of the aldermen more pressingly than his opponents. The bribery which he denounces is the bribery of the courtiers, the artless, "direct bribery" which is given in cash, and not the subtler kind of bribery, the "indirect bribery" which is practised by

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1. Works, III, p.272.

him and has the sanction of his leaders.[1] Hence it is that almost in the same breath in which he reprimands the aldermen for their venality and unprincipled and unpatriotic behaviour he begins to enumerate the favours he has in store for them. First of all he tackles Mr. Mayor, the most difficult as well as the most important of the lot (Mr. Mayor is also the returning officer). He reminds him of the "three bucks" he had sent him. Mr. Mayor remembers the gift but not its taste. Finding him short of memory in this respect, Sir Henry promises to revive it by repeating the favour; and since "venison" is "a very dry meat", he also undertakes to "find a way to moisten it ... if there be any wine in the town".[2] This assurance

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1. The subtle difference between the bribery of the Court nominees and that of a country gentleman is pointed out by Caleb in the Craftsman of January 10, 1730. The following excerpt from this number will illustrate how closely Sir Henry's views resemble those of the party spokesmen. Addressing the free-holders and electors on the eve of the elections to certain vacant seats, Caleb denounces the acceptance of bribery and yet says:

   > a rich country Gentleman in your own Neighbourhood, whom you chuse [sic] out of Affection, and who hath a reciprocal Affection for you, will not only cordially espouse and support the true Interest of your respective Corporations in Parliament, by encouraging your Manufactures, and endeavouring to redress your Grievances; but will likewise be of most service to you out of the House, by spending his Money amongst you; being always ready to hear your Complaints; to do you good Offices and to relieve Those, whom Misfortunes have render'd necessitous. Act of Charity, Beneficence and Hospitality are not prohibited ... by this Act [the Act of Bribery and Corruption] ... nor indeed does there seem to be any Occasion for a Bill to prevent this kind of Liberality.

   See also the Craftsman for August 5, 1727 in which voters are advised to prefer 'patriots' money to the ministerial bribes. For an instance of the 'indirect' bribery of the Country Party, see Daily Courant for July 22, 1734.

2. Works III, 272.

seems to satisfy Mr. Mayor but he will not pledge his support yet. Sir Henry will have to throw something more to tilt the balance in his favour. And this he does presently. Addressing the members of the Corporation one by one, he says:

> Mr. Alderman Stitch, your bill is too reasonable, you certainly must lose by it: send me in half a dozen more great-coats, pray; my servants are the dirtiest dogs! Mr. Damask, I believe you are afraid to trust me, by those few yards of silk you sent my wife - she likes the pattern so extremely, she is resolved to hang her rooms with it - pray let me have a hundred yards of it; I shall want more of you.[1]

This is all very good. But the announcement which clinches the issue definitely in Sir Henry's favour comes when, moving cautiously and craftily, he reveals his intention "to pull down [his] old house, and build a new one."[2] This was meant to be a master-stroke and, true to Sir Henry's expectations, it produces the desired effect immediately. All the aldermen, including Mr. Tinker, Mr. Iron and, more particularly, Mr. Mayor - who will supply "bricks" for the new house - are taken by surprise by this unexpected and extremely gratifying part of Sir Henry's election-speech which makes them give up their pose of neutrality and drink the same toast which, only a little while ago, Sir Henry had proposed and they had rejected.

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1. Ibid., 272-73.
2. Works III, p.273. Trapwit's emphasis on the word 'house' is significant. It refers to the political house, the House of Commons.

The way Sir Henry deals with the Mayor and the aldermen is ingenious no doubt but all the same it is a cheap and crude and ignominious sort of political salesmanship ill-becoming a man of Sir Henry's social stature and political pretensions. But he is one of those numerous men in the Opposition who spoke not with one but two tongues - with one to denounce bribery and with the other to offer bribery. Hence it is that immediately after having bribed the aldermen and the Mayor he takes the latter by the hand and shamelessly asserts his integrity, saying

> I hate bribery and corruption: if this corporation will not suffer itself to be bribed, there shall not be a poor man in it.[1]

How Sir Henry and Squire Tankard tackle the less important but more needy men, the voters, is not shown in the play. Fielding does not bring them face to face with the voters in the way the Court candidates are, and, therefore, not much can be said about the nature of the promises and assurances given to them. But from the fact that the voters, too, like Mr. Mayor and the aldermen, had been "touched" by the Courtiers and, therefore, needed a brain-wash, one can safely presume that both Sir Henry and Squire Tankard must have acted with promptitude and diligence in performing this act of ablution. The medium used by them for

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1. Works III, p.273. Fielding is here obviously ridiculing that argument of the Opposition which ran to the effect that many boroughs were poor because of corruption and corrupt because of poverty (see, for example, the Craftsman of June 14, 1729).

this sacred purpose must, in any case, have been the wine which occupies a place of pride both in their present election campaign and in their political programme for the future. For one of them, Sir Henry, it symbolizes the ancient English hospitality which, now dying out, he would no doubt like to see revived;[1] and for the other, the sottish squire, it holds the key to the prosperity of "the trade of the nation" which, now languishing, he would like to boost up.[2] Hence it is that they have fixed their camp at no other place than the "tavern" where "brisk wine" improves their conversation and, also, puts them in a proper (that is, frivolous) mood to discuss the affairs of the nation with a view to reform them.[3] That they get the better of their adversaries because of the courageous performance of their wine-drenched supporters at "dry blows" indicates both their indebtedness to this vital invigorating commodity and the assuidity with which they must have kept its flow un-interrupted throughout the electioneering period.

Having unmasked the hypocritical conduct of the Country Party, Fielding proceeds to examine its post-election aims and intentions. In the final scene between the candidates of that party and Mr. Mayor one comes across this interesting and eye-opening dialogue:

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1. Works III, 284-5.
2. Ibid., 284.
3. Ibid., 286.

Mayor: But there is a thought comes often into my head, which is this; if these courtiers be turn'd out, who shall succeed them?

Sir Harry: Who? Why we!

Squire: Ay, we!

Sir Harry: And then we may provide for our friends; I love my country, but I don't know why I may not get something by it as well as another; at least to reimburse me - And I do assure you, though I have not bribed a single vote, my election will stand me in a good five thousand pounds.

Squire: Ay, and so will mine me, - but if ever we should get uppermost, Sir Harry, I insist upon immediately paying off the debts of the nation.

Sir Harry: Mr. Tankard, that shall be done with all convenient speed.

Squire: I'll have no delay in it, Sir.

Mayor: There spoke the spirit of a true Englishman: ah! I love to hear the Squire speak, he will be a great honour to his country in foreign parts.[1]

Later on another important secret is divulged when Mr. Mayor goes to tell his wife that --

the sides are going to be chang'd; and Sir Harry is to be -

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1. Works III, p.285.

> I don't know what to call him, not I - some very great man; and as soon as he is a very great man, I am to be made an ambassador of.[1]

The implications of the information supplied here and in the earlier passage need no explanation. In a few words Fielding has expressed his personal view regarding the complexion of the things once the Country Party comes into power. He suggests without any ambiguity that though the leaders of the Opposition promise to act differently they will not do so when they are at the helm of national affairs. It would be simply a change of men, not a change of measures and policies. The National Debts instead of being handled intelligently will continue to be a subject of debates, discussions and subtle interpretations favourable to the people in office; in other words, the Sinking Fund will be utilized (as it is under Walpole) for purposes other than those it was introduced for. Similarly, corruption and favouritism will remain rife as they have been for years and important posts, both ministerial and diplomatic, will still be given to "friends" no matter how incompetent and undeserving they might be.

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1. Ibid., 287.

iv. The 'Patriots'

But for a sarcastic and rather ambiguous allusion in Author's Farce,[1] Fielding's direct observations on the pretended patriotism and public zeal of a good many members of the Country Party are to be found in his last but one play, the Historical Register.[2] In the famous auction scene of this play he gives a description of the virtues and qualities of this spurious type of patriotism by means of a dialogue between the autioneer, Mr. Hen, and his clients, which runs as follows:

Mr. Hen: ... Lot 2. A most delicate piece of Patriotism, Gentlemen, who bids? ten pounds for this piece of Patriotism?

1st Courtier: I would not wear it for a thousand pounds.

Hen: Sir, I assure you, several gentlemen at court have worn the same; it's quite a different thing within to what it is without.

1st Courtier: Sir, it is prohibited goods, I shan't run the risk of being brought into Westminster-hall for wearing it.

Hen: You take it for the Old Patriotism, whereas it is indeed like that in nothing but the cut; but alas! Sir, there is a great difference in the stuff - But, Sir, I don't propose this

1. This allusion is to be found in Luckless' ironical comment on Bookweight and his team of scribblers: 'Who can form to himself an idea more amiable than of a man at the head of so many patriots working for the benefit of their country.' (Works, 1, 311).

2. It is to be noted that, according to the traditions of the day, the 'courtiers in disgrace', Grizzle, Foodle, William, Sir Loveland,

for a town-suit, this is only proper for the country; consider, Gentlemen, what a figure this will make at an election - Come, five pounds - One guinea - put Patriotism by.

Banter: Ay, put it by, one day or other it may be in fashion.[1]

Banter's wish is soon realized. Though there is no bidder for this article at the moment, it does not remain in Mr. Hen's auction-room for long. Towards the close of the play we come across a set of people who have put on a mantle of "patriotism" which answers fully the properties of Mr. Hen's "most delicate piece". As will be soon seen, their patriotism is not exactly the same thing from within what it appears to be from without; it, too, can be mistaken for "Old Patriotism" with which it has very little to do; and it, also, is meant for occasional and temporary use, to be cast aside when it has served its purpose.

The people who don this mantle are four in number. Every word and every action of theirs is worth watching. They come on the stage not from one door, as one would expect, but from four <u>different</u> doors. They shake hands with one another but do

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Sir Henry and Squire Tankard can all be deemed as 'patriots' and, therefore, whatever Fielding has said about them can be legitimately construed as a criticism of the 'patriots' as well.

1. <u>Works</u> III, 359.

not utter a single word for quite some time. What is in their mind, and what they shall soon be vociferating after they get " a little heated with wine",[1] is, however, made fairly intelligible by the perpetual side-wise movement of their heads. After this significant dumb-show, they take their glasses in their hands and start drinking their favourite but dis-similar healths.[2] The first patriot drinks to "Prosperity to Corsica" (Corsica of course is England), the second to "liberty and property" - the most popular of all the slogans coined by the Opposition - and the third to "Success to trade". The toast of the fourth patriot is virtually the same as that of the third but it has a qualifying clause - "Ay, to trade - to trade - particularly to my shop." Their tongues, now loosened by wine, begin wagging glibly notwithstanding Mr. Medley's assertion that there will not be "any great speaking in [the] scene". The matters they talk about are the well-known and well-discussed ones - the plight of the country, the merits and demerits

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1. For this and subsequent quotations see Works III, pp.372-75.
2. The conduct of the 'Patriots' under the influence of wine provides an illustration for Fielding's view presented in Tom Jones: that --
   > drink, in reality, doth not reverse nature or create passions in men which did not exist in them before. It takes away the guard of reason, and consequently forces us to produce those symptoms which many, when sober, have art enough to conceal. It heightens and inflames our passions (generally indeed that passion which is uppermost in our mind), so that the angry temper, the amorous, the generous, the good-humoured, the avaricious, and all other dispositions of men, are in their cups heightened and exposed.
   > (Book V, Ch. IX; Works VI, 269-70).

of war and peace. The ball is set rolling by the first Patriot, the "noisy patriot, who drinks and roars for his country, and never does either good or harm in it". Addressing his friends, he gives expression to his views on these momentous matters:

> Gentlemen, I think this our island of Corsica is in an ill state: I do not say we are actually in war, for that we are not; but however we are threatened with it daily, and why may not the apprehension of a war, like other evils, be worse than the evil itself; for my part, this I will say, this I will venture to say, that let what will happen I will drink a health to peace.

The second Patriot is a "cautious patriot" who assures the first Patriot that he shares his views but for the sake of discretion he would like to pledge his support only "under the rose"; that is to say, he will not openly declare his preference for "peace" until he finds a propitious moment for that. The third Patriot is totally a "self-interested patriot" and he has entirely a different criterion for judging the issues in question. He declares:

> Look'e, gentlemen, my shop is my country, I always measure the prosperity of the latter by that of the former. My country is either richer or poorer, in my opinion, as my trade rises or falls; therefore, Sir, I cannot agree with you that a war would be disserviceable: on the contrary, I think it the only way to make my country

flourish; for as I am a sword-cutler, it would make my shop flourish, so here's to war.[1]

The fourth Patriot, too, stands apart from others but in a different way. He is an "indolent patriot"; but his indolence is a product of prudence. He follows the policy of a particular "prudent man" whom Mr. Medley has seen with his own eyes falling asleep "at the beginning of a fray, and never wake till the end on't." However, when this indolent patriot does wake up from his simulated sleep, he catches the last word of the third patriot and, pretending not to know what has been going on, drinks alike to "war" and to "peace" - an action from which one would infer that his business or profession is of such a nature that it is not likely to be affected adversely either by war or by peace.

As things stand now there are two patriots in favour of peace and one against. The lack of unanimity even in matters of such importance is obvious. On one particular point, however, there is no difference of opinion between them at all. They each agree that all of them are "a set of miserable poor dogs". But this is denied by Quidam who had been watching them from the wing and laughing "in his sleeve" at their deliberations. Pouring the contents of his purse on the table, he asks them

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1. This speech should have been delivered by the fourth Patriot. Fielding seems to have overlooked the distinctions he had already made through the different 'toasts' of the patriots.

"can Corsica be poor while there is this in it?" Or, will they still consider themselves "a set of poor dogs" when they can have all this "honest gold" and divide it among themselves? The force of Quidam's argument is felt by one and all, particularly by the first Patriot, who speaking for himself and for others expresses his "opinion ... freely", saying

> a man may be in the wrong through ignorance, but he's a rascal who speaks with open eyes against his conscience - I own I thought we were poor, but, Sir, you have convinc'd me that we are rich.

That in accepting Quidam's "honest gold" they are betraying the interest of their country, they have no inclination to admit - or to suspect - specially because Mr. Quidam has sought no extraordinary favour from them in return of that. His generosity seems to have no strings attached to it. That by doing so they have foolishly put their hands within Mr. Quidam's golden chains, they are, for the time being, in no proper state of mind to discover. It would be only when their euphoric sensations are over - which will happen soon after they have danced a jig with him and attended to his "motions" - that the fact will dawn upon them that they had the worst of the bargain and that instead of gaining anything from their apostasy they had lost what little they had of their own.

What actual event or events Fielding has here ridiculed is not easy to find out. Medley's remarks on the 'patriots' -

particularly on the indolent patriot - and Fielding's condemnation of the "cunning, self-interested fellows, who for a little paltry bribe would give up the liberties and properties of their country" in the Dedication of the play[1] lead one to suspect that Fielding had the conduct of some particular well-known 'patriots' in his mind while writing this scene. In fact, it would be quite safe to assume that Fielding wrote this scene purposely to satirize those 'patriots'. But who exactly they were is anybody's guess. Cross suggests that this scene, like the Fan incident in Pasquin, was meant to refer to the defection of John Hervey.[2] That would have been all right if only Cross had managed to establish that Hervey was ever a 'patriot'. So far as we know - and our knowledge is confined to Hervey's own account - Hervey had never been a member of the Country Party. The only contact he had with that Party was through his very close friend William Pulteney, the political idol of his family, particularly of his wife and father who both detested Walpole. But Hervey never allowed this friendship (which didn't last long) to interfere seriously with his interests which were linked up for the time being with those of Walpole. An act of apostasy was certainly committed by Hervey but that was from Walpole's side to the 'patriot' side and that, too, towards the close of Walpole's premiership, much after Fielding had stopped writing for the stage. Besides, there is

1. Works, III, 339.
2. Cross, 1, 182, 215.

yet another reason for rejecting Cross's thesis; and that, one finds in the distinctive traits of the 'patriots' of which none agrees with the well-known characteristics either of the real John Hervey or of the fictitious John Hervey (that is to say, Fielding's own 'John' of Grub-Street Opera and 'Beau Didapper' of Joseph Andrews[1] and Pope's "Sporus" and "Lord Fanny").

Against Cross's suggestion we have the opinion of Hessler who believes that, like Pope in Epilogue to the Satires (Dial 1, l.24), Fielding was here referring to Pulteney himself and to his close friends like Carteret.[2] This seems more likely, for in the eventless year of 1736 (so, to the astonishment of the Daily Gazetteer,[3] Fielding avers) one of the few things of historic importance that did happen was the sudden loss of glow (if not complete extinction of) in the flame of patriotism that had been burning in the hearts of these two great leaders.[4] But this conjecture, with all its plausibility, should not make one exclude the possibility that Fielding, in this particular scene, was alluding to all those erstwhile 'patriots' who had in the past few years deserted the Country Party and were now actually attending to Walpole's "motions" in the two Houses, the 'patriots'

1. Book IV, Chapters 7, 9, 11 and 14. See Martin C. Batlestin's article, 'Lord Hervey's Role in Joseph Andrews', PQ XLII (1963) pp.226-41.
2. p.138.
3. The Daily Gazetteer, May 7, 1737.
4. Hervey, Memoirs, 11, 529; III., 703, 752-4, 788. See also Hervey's letter to Henry Fox, dated February 10, 1735 (Ilchester, 220-21).

like Lord Trevor, Sir Thomas Pengelly, Robert Price, Thomas Winnington, Lord Bingley and Lord Lonsdale[1] as well as to those 'patriots' who were still sitting on the fence and were ready to desert the Country interest at an opportune moment.

I would, therefore, suggest that the 'patriots' in the Historical Register represent all those present and former members of the Country Party who had joined it not out of public zeal or conscientious qualms over Walpole's policies but purely for personal reasons (to get better price from Walpole) and had, to the annoyance and dismay of the few genuine patriots, actually reduced "patriotism ... into a jest"[2] as much through their internecine quarrels and intrigues as through their flirtations with Walpole. But what interests one most is the fact that Fielding neither in the Historical Register nor in his later works reveals any sign of distress or annoyance over the conduct of the so-called 'patriots'. He certainly disapproved of it. In the Dedication of the play he made it perfectly clear that in his opinion the greatest danger to the constitution of the country and its "liberties and properties" was to be found not so much in the diabolical activities of Walpole (who had to cheat and deceive one and all in order to live up to his reputation of being a devil incarnate) or in the incompetence of his (Walpole's) blundering politicians but in the false pretensions of those men

1. For more details on these defections see Hervey (Memoirs 1, 189) and Foord (p.130).
2. The Historical Register (Works III, 371).

who styled themselves as "the guardians and bulwark of our liberty" for the sake of expediency alone and then renounced this title and this role when they discovered that their narrow and selfish ends had either been already served or were likely to be served otherwise.[1] But with the exception of this brief statement in the Dedication (which, as has been said elsewhere, would not have been written in the form it was had Fielding not been attacked by Lord Hervey in the Daily Gazetteer of May 7, 1737)[2] there is absolutely no evidence whatsoever in the whole corpus of Fielding's writings to suggest that he actually and genuinely felt hurt by the behaviour of the 'patriots'. On the contrary, if one takes into account Fielding's description and treatment of the 'patriots' in the Historical Register (and

1. Works III, 339.

2. In his subsequent 'Pasquin' letter published in the Common Sense of May 21, 1737, Fielding gave somewhat different explanation for the 'Patriot' scene in the Historical Register. Refuting Hervey's allegation that he had turned 'Patriotism ... into a jest' and ridiculed his own 'patrons', that is the whole lot of the Opposition leaders (Daily Gazetteer, May 7, 1737), Fielding said that he had only 'endeavoured to shew the several Obstructions to a proper exerting this Noble Principle ... and [also] to show, that whoever gives up the Interest of his Country, in Fact gives up his own'. The 'Patriot' scene, read in the light of this explanation, would no doubt appear simply as a dramatization of the stories of the seduction of the 'patriots' by Walpole which used to appear in the Opposition papers from time to time (see Craftsman of 17.2.1727, 7.10.1727, 1.8.1730, and more particularly, Swift's Progress of Patriotism published in the Intelligencer and reproduced as an appendix to Volume V of the Craftsman). But it would be wrong to assume that it is just that and nothing else. One important point about Fielding's description of the 'patriots' (this is true of later descriptions as well) is that unlike other Opposition writers (besides above references, see Beggars Opera, Act II, Sc. X, where Gay reflecting on Walpole's practice makes Peachum confide to Lockit: 'In one respect indeed, our employment may be reckoned dishonest, because, like great Statesmen, we encourage those who betray their friends') he does

earlier plays as well), in The Opposition,[1] in Joseph Andrews,[2] in Jonathan Wild,[3] in Plutus,[4] in A Journey from this World,[5] in True Patriot,[6] in Covent Garden Journal[7] and even in The Champion[8] one cannot help feeling that Fielding really enjoyed questioning and probing and laying bare their latent motives and, also, that he regarded this act as a great service to the

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not emphasize Walpole's deceptive wiles so much as the willingness of the 'patriots' to sell themselves. His 'patriots' are not the unwary, inexperienced, simple-minded 'patriots' like Sir Ralph (The Progress of Patriotism) who on being convinced that the Court and Country interests are same and inseparable fall unwittingly into Walpole's trap. They are, rather, shrewd, calculating men impatient to get rid of their unrewarding 'patriotism' and make a bargain with Walpole. They do not belong to Sir Ralph's class but to that of those contemptible creatures who gave an excuse even to Walpole to say:

> 'we Ministers are generally called, andare sometimes, the Tempters, but we are often tempted.' (Walpoliana, p.7)

1. The Opposition: A Vision (London, 1742)
2. Bk II, Chapters 7-10 (Works V, pp.153-165); See Battestin, 'Fielding's Changing Politics and Joseph Andrews', PQ XXXIX (1960).
3. Bk IV, Ch. III (Works IV, 270-75).
4. In Fielding and Young's translation of Plutus occurs the following footnote:

   > To make use of popular Interest, and the Character of Patriotism, in order to betray one's Country, is perhaps the most flagitious of all Crimes ... (II.v)

5. See Bk I, Ch.VII (Works IV, 372-3) and, also, Chapter XX (431-38) towards the close of which Julian describes his feigned public spirit.
6. See references in Cross, II, (34-35).
7. See the issue for January 14, 1752 in which Fielding defines 'Patriot' as 'A Candidate for a Place at Court' and 'Politics' as 'The art of getting such a place'. The issue for May 26, 1752 contains a bit more detailed and sarcastic description of the 'patriots', 'the guardians of liberty' who roar and rant, hallow and huzza, game and get drunk 'in the service of their country.'
8. See the issue of January 12, 1740, for the following ironical exhortation to the 'turn-coats':

   > Put not off until tomorrow what you can do today; you may die before you attain that by a change in the

deluded nation; perhaps even a greater service than the one rendered through exposing to ridicule the already well-exposed and well-recognized limitations of Walpole and his administration. One feels that had the great Doctor made his famous pronouncement on patriotism in Fielding's lifetime, he would certainly have endorsed it, though, for the sake of accuracy he might have suggested a slight modification. For Fielding too the "patriotism", as practised in his time, was a convenient "refuge" for the "scoundrels"; but not the "last refuge", only a temporary one.

But, although a considerable number of the unsteady, unprincipled scoundrels had joined the patriot ranks, it does not follow that all the 'patriots' were scoundrels. Fielding was aware of this fact. He knew that there were a few individuals in the Country Party whose attachment to and concern for the country and its people was inspired by no sordid personal considerations. He was deeply impressed by their words as well as by their deeds, specially by the sacrifices they had made for the sake of their laudable views. This awareness alone accounts for the ambivalence Fielding has revealed in certain remarks on the 'patriots' (and 'patriotism') in the Historical Register, which otherwise look entirely out of the context; the remarks like Banter's --

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government, which you may perhaps get now by a change in your principles.

See, also, the issue of May 24, 1740 for a Lucianic vision in which Mercury does not allow a 'bustling person' to cross Styx until he shakes off his 'patriotism'.

> 'Ay, put it [patriotism] by, one day or other it may be in fashion.'[1]

or Medley's

> You will observe, Mr. Sourwit, that I place my politicians and my patriots at opposite ends of my piece, which I do, Sir, to shew the wide difference between them; I begin with my politicians, to signify that they will always have the preference in the world to patriots, and I end with patriots to leave a good relish in the mouths of my audience.[2]

Medley's two other statements on the 'patriots' have more or less the same implication as the preceding one. The one made immediately after the arrival of the 'patriots' on the stage runs as follows:

> you cannot, however, expect any great speaking in this scene, for though I do not make my patriots politicians, I don't make them fools.[3]

and the other is on the shabby dress of the 'patriots'. Medley explaining why they are so dressed, says --

> They are the cheaper dress'd; besides, no man can be too low for a patriot, though perhaps it is possible he may be too high.[4]

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1. Works III, 359.
2. Ibid., 371.
3. Ibid., 372.
4. Ibid., 372.

All the above passages indicate Fielding's desire to distinguish true patriotism from false patriotism.[1] They also give a measure of the difficulty encountered by him in doing so. He certainly wished to except certain 'true patriots', but whether this exception was accepted or even noticed by his audience is rather doubtful. If any reliance is to be put on the testimony of Lord Hervey - and there is no reason why one should not - the people who flocked to the Haymarket Theatre to see this play, failed to make any such distinction, for they laughed as heartily at the 'patriots' in general as at the 'politicians'.[2]

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1. The possibility that these particular passages may have been occasioned simply by the necessity of leaving 'a good relish in the mouths of ... audience' cannot be ruled out.

2. The Daily Gazetteer of May 7 and June 4, 1737. However, Hervey's allegation that the 'Patriots ... consented to have themselves play'd, only to exhibit that IMPUDENT FELLOW, who can stand their Hisses, and laugh in his sleeve at them', does not sound very probable.

CHAPTER VI

FIELDING'S POLITICAL AFFINITIES AND HIS VIEWS ON PARTY-POLITICS

A. Fielding and Walpole

There is a certain amount of unanimity among Fielding scholars regarding his relations with Walpole (and with the opposition) during the seven effective years of his career as a playwright. Almost everyone of them from Godden to Dudden and Loftis is of opinion that these relations so far as Fielding was concerned were governed largely, if not wholly, by mercenary considerations and were, therefore, characterized by that sort of inconsistency and fickleness which goes with the fluctuating hopes and changing moods of a needy but sensitive person. It is, therefore, maintained that over the years 1730-1737 Fielding struck no less than four distinct and different attitudes.[1] The first, which covered the whole of 1730 and a part of the year following, that of an ambitious, enterprising, self-confident lad who befriended the friends of the Prime Minister, presented himself at his levees, dropped to him the hints that he was willing to work for him and acquired through these and sundry other similar acts of his the "reputation of belonging to the outskirts" of Walpole's camp. The second, whose course was of a very short duration - just a few months of the summer of 1731 - that of an

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1. See Godden, 43; Cross I, 76, 114, 123, 157, 172; Digeon 27; Dudden I, 29-31; Woods, 222, 248, 453 and PQ XXVIII; Loftis 104, 130, 131, 137-40; Hessler, 130.

amused and non-aligned observer of the political scene ready to poke fun at all the leading persons of the day, including the members of the royal family. The third, which lasted roughly for the next three years, that is, from the last quarter of 1731 to the first of 1734, that of a humble and obsequious supplicant who in his eagerness to acquire the great man's patronage wore his "badge" publicly and thus exposed himself to the shots and censures of the enemies of that great man. The fourth one, which began in April 1734 and outlasted Fielding's active association with the London Stage but not Walpole's premiership, that of an out-raged and disappointed and embittered man who having lost every hope of receiving substantial assistance from the great minister joined hands with his opponents out of sheer spite and became, eventually, one of his most acrimonious critics. The evidence cited in support of this facile and apparently sound analysis of Fielding-Walpole relationship is as follows:

For phase I:-

i. The two epistolary poems addressed by Fielding to Walpole, one in 1730 and the other in 1731.

ii. Fielding's epilogue for Theobald's Orestes who, in 1730's, was "definitely in the Walpole camp."[1]

iii. The contemporary rumours regarding Walpole's friendly gestures towards Fielding.

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1. Woods, 'Fielding's Epilogue for Theobald', PQ XXVIII (1949), 419-24.

For phase II:-

i. The non-partisan satire of the Welsh Opera and of its enlarged version.

For phase III:-

i. Fielding's abjuration of political satire after the admonitory suppression of the Grub-Street Opera and his subsequent joining of the Drury Lane Theatre.

ii. Fielding's dedication of the Modern Husband to Walpole and the close resemblance between this dedication and that of Orestes, Fielding's being "fully as eulogistic" as Theobald's.[1]

iii. The hostility of the Grub-Street Journal towards Fielding occasioned by the above dedication.

For phase IV:-

i. The dedication of Don Quixote and the Universal Gallant to Walpole's declared enemies.

ii. The unsparing attack on Walpole in Fielding's later plays.

It is not my intention to be so presumptuous as to question the findings and verdicts of the eminent critics and I hope what I am going to say in the following pages will be taken as nothing but an attempt to present a point of view somewhat different from theirs. I believe very strongly that during the period under

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1. Ibid.

consideration Fielding's conduct towards Walpole was not so changeable and inconsistent as it has been generally made out to be and, also, that though this conduct was undoubtedly determined by mercenary considerations, Fielding's expectations of filling his empty purse with clinking coins centred not on Walpole or his opponents but on the citizens of London whose unabating dislike for Sir Robert contributed in no small measure to that sustained attack on him which we find in his plays. As the latter part of my contention has been mentioned and considered earlier (in Chapter III), I shall here concern myself only with the former part of it and endeavour to establish its tenability mainly by examining the reliability, or otherwise, of the evidences listed above.

First of all the two poems, which in my opinion need not be taken into account at all. There is no reason to believe that Fielding had composed them with any intention of loosening Walpole's purse-strings in his favour or obtaining a "sinecure" from him. The very tone of the poems, which is nothing if not frivolous and most probably a burlesque of the "poetical petitions" of "Sir Robert Walpole's poet", James Mitchell,[1] rules out such assumptions. One finds it rather hard to believe that a man so remarkable for his robust common sense as Fielding could ever have entertained the slightest hope of winning Walpole's

1. Theophilus Cibber, Lives of the Poets, [1753] iv. 347.

protection by means of the poems in which he had, somewhat impudently, drawn a parallel between Walpole's "greatness" and that of his own, bantered his "lack of interest in letters", and introduced innuendoes upon his secretaries, judges, bishops and treaty-makers. Moreover, nobody knows for certain that these poems were ever sent to Walpole. They had, like Fielding's other poems, no doubt circulated among Fielding's friends[1] and the possibility of their having reached Walpole's hands cannot be totally excluded.[2] But on this possibility we cannot base our judgment and say with Dudden that these poems were designed to be "a half-humorous, half-serious attempt to attract the attention of ... the Prime Minister".[3] The only significance

1. Fielding, Preface to the Miscellanies (Works, XI, 83-98).
2. The Cholmondeley (Houghton) Manuscripts and the files of the Public Record Office, which I consulted on the advice of Dr. J.H. Plumb, contain no reference to these poems; nor do the various collections of the poems (such as John Watts' Musical Miscellany) published between 1730 and 1737. One of them, the 'first epistle' was, however, printed in the Gentleman Magazine in December 1738 (Vol. VIII, 653). But, as Henry Miller has suggested (Essays on Fielding's Miscellanies [Princeton, 1961], 127n), it was sent to the publishers of the magazine not by Fielding but by someone who 'wished to embarrass Fielding'. (Miller calls it a 'mangled' and 'inferior' version, but most probably it was the original version). Fielding himself published these poems only in 1743, in the Miscellanies.
3. Vol. I, 29. Dudden also suggests that this 'attempt' may have been made at the 'instigation' of James Ralph who at the time of the composition of these two 'epistles' was working for Walpole. This is an assumption which cannot be easily accepted. Fielding definitely had better connections with Walpole than Ralph had and if he had really felt inclined to improve his relations with Walpole, he could have done so without Ralph's intercessions and suggestions. Moreover, granting that Fielding had sought Ralph's help in this respect, I cannot see how Ralph could advise him to seek Walpole's patronage through that form of writing for which Fielding, as he himself admitted (Preface to the Miscellanies), had but very meagre talents. It would have

which these facetious epistles seem to have is confined to one point: they, like the Modern Husband, contain an evidence of Fielding's presence at Walpole's levees. The allusions to the encounters with Walpole's admission-denying porters and to the impossibility of finding him either at home or at leisure appear to be based on an experience which was not totally feigned.

The inference drawn by the late Prof. C.B. Woods from Fielding's providing an epilogue for Theobald's Orestes (kept for long in cold storage probably because of the Dunciad) does not sound very convincing either. He seems to have seen in this otherwise inexplicable act of Fielding (inexplicable because of Fielding's lasting dislike for Theobald the most recent demonstration of which he had given just ten days before the performance of Orestes, that is, in his Tragedy of Tragedies) an almost incontestable proof of Fielding's desire to make known to the world that he too, at that time, had the honour of perambulating along the charmed periphery of Walpole's admirers.[1] There is no doubt about Theobald's attachment to Walpole or about his sincere wish to pay back to him in the shape of an effusive dedication the debt of gratitude that he owed to him for his efforts in connection with the laureateship. But the proximity of the Tragedy of

been more reasonable for Ralph to suggest (and more convenient for Fielding to execute) to him to dedicate one of his plays to Walpole, or, to go to the extreme, to start writing articles in defence of the ministry as Ralph himself was doing. However, Fielding's own statement in the Preface to the Miscellanies - that these poems, like others, were 'Productions of the Heart rather than of the Head' - indicates that he did not set much store by them.

1. Woods, PQ, XXVIII, 419-24.

Tragedies (presented on 24.3.1731 and still drawing crowds at the Haymarket Theatre) and the Welsh Opera (staged about 3 weeks after the first performance of Orestes) to Theobald's play dissuades one from believing that Fielding, in the early months of 1731, was genuinely interested in ingratiating himself with Walpole. If he was, he would not only have not staged the two plays but chosen much less circuitous a way of approaching and propitiating Walpole than by writing an indifferent epilogue, which was discarded on special occasions (such as when the Royalty paid a visit to Lincoln's Inns Fields[1]), for an indifferent play of one of Walpole's not much valued friends. It seems more likely that Fielding undertook this task, ever an unpleasant one for him, not to get enlisted in Walpole's retinue or to make amends to Theobald for the injuries he had inflicted on him (for he was to injure him again), but to please some one through whom Theobald had solicited this favour, some one to whom Fielding simply could not say 'nay'.

As far as contemporary reports about the indulgence shown by Walpole to Fielding during this period (1730-31) are concerned our attention has hitherto been drawn to only two of them - the ironical article in the opposition paper, Fog's Weekly Journal of August 1, 1730, and a pamphlet of 1740, called An Historical View of the Principles, Characters, Persons, and etc. of the Political Writers in Great Britain. The writer in Fog's Journal,

1. On April 27, 1731.

attempting to sneer at Walpole's low literary taste, first mentions by way of illustration Walpole's subscription for "thirty books" of Hurlothrumbo and then proceeds to say:

> The Great Man we are speaking of seems to imitate that Monarch [Charles II] in his Encouragement of Things of this kind for I am credibly inform'd that he three times graced with his Presence that sublime Drama call'd The History of Tom Thumb, acted at the little House in the Haymarket ...

Similar insinuating report had appeared in an earlier issue of the Journal. I have not been able to locate this report but a letter published in the Craftsman of July 11, 1730, shows that its contents were virtually the same as given in the passage quoted above. After listing Walpole's "achievements", which included his patronage of the "worst" writers who, unlike the "best", could not support themselves, the author of this letter, Courtly Grub, says:

> If he [Walpole] never shower'd down his Favours upon such Men as Prior, Addison, Congreve, or Swift; even your Brother Fog allows that he gave no small Encouragement to those sublime Productions, Hurlothrumbo and Tom Thumb.

The veracity of these reports cannot be taken for granted. I say this not only in view of the well-known hostility of Fog's Journal and the Craftsman towards Walpole but also in view of the equally well-known fact that Robert Walpole at no stage of his

fairly long life was known to be so fond of dramatic performances as to go and see the same piece, even if actually 'sublime', enacted three times over. Furthermore, we know for a certainty that the earlier part of the report published in Fog's Journal is entirely baseless. Though Walpole certainly had a hand in the astonishing success of Samuel Johnson's play, it was not he but his son Lord Robert Walpole,[1] the dedicatee of Hurlothrumbo, who had subscribed for its "thirty books". Because of this intentional distortion of fact in one case some reservation has to be shown in accepting the other account as it appears. To my mind there is hardly any justification for attributing the success of Fielding's play to Walpole (Swift's admiration of it shows it did not need any external support) or for seeing in Walpole's alleged presence at the Haymarket Theatre any definite proof of his encouragements and favours to Fielding. Fielding's own sarcastic reflections on Walpole's patronage of Samuel Johnson (and Henley) in The Author's Farce[2] would make one think that he had not received much encouragement from that quarter and whatever he had received, it was not of the same magnitude as that afforded to the author of Hurlothrumbo.

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1. The confusion between the father and the son, Sir and Lord Robert Walpole, may be excusable in a modern writer like Arthur H. Scouten (See London Stage, Pt. III, vol.i, p.l) but not among Walpole's contemporary critics who knew every shoot and branch of his family tree and the honours tacked on to them.

2. See above, pp.30 and 50.

The other document referred to above, An Historical View, gives some very interesting information about Fielding, particularly about his earlier relations with Walpole. After mentioning the popularity of the Champion among the "lower kind of readers", the author of this pamphlet says:

> The person who conducts this Paper chiefly is one F____ng, son to a General Officer of that name, and Author of several Pieces that had some success on the Stage. He is a strong instance of ingratitude to the Ministry, as he lies under the strongest obligations to Sir R____t W____le, whom he treats with a strain of insolence and scurrility superior to any other Paper ever went before, not excepting even the Craftsman or Common-Sense. I have some reasons to know particular obligations he lies under to the Minister, who once generously reliev'd him by sending him a considerable supply of ready money when he was arrested in a country town some distance from London, and must have rotted in prison had it not been for this generosity in the Minister. Soon after he libelled him personally in a satire, and next week had the impudence to appear at his levee. Upon Sir R____t's taxing him with his ingratitude, and asking him why he had wrote so and so; he answered very readily, that he wrote that he might eat. However Sir R____t still continued his generosity to him, till he grew quite abandoned to all sense of shame. He then set up for a play-writer, and push'd his natural turn

> for ridicule and satire so far, that upon the Ministry getting into their hands a play in manuscript wrote by him, it was thought proper to pass the Act by which the Stage was subjected to a Licencer [sic] ...

This document, no doubt a very valuable one, was written by someone who had an unmistakable bias for the Ministry.[2] And it was written in the light of the conditions prevailing in early 1740 when, except for Fielding's Champion, most of the Opposition papers had lost much of their vigour, charm and appeal. The passage quoted above was definitely written with the set purpose of magnifying Fielding's ingratitude and meanness against Walpole's generosity and magnanimity. There was nothing new in this attempt. Similar attempts were made, and were still being made, in Walpole's own paper, the Daily Gazetteer. The stories of Fielding's imprisonment and his authorship of the Golden Rump had already appeared in its columns.[3] The determination of 'Monsieur B____', the author of the pamphlet, to prove Fielding guilty, and his unquestioning acceptance of the allegations made against him reveal that, despite his claim to impartiality, he was examining Fielding's past career and conduct through the same pair of glasses which had done service to 'Mrs. Osborne' and her

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1. An Historical View ... (1740), 49-51.
2. There is absolutely no basis for ascribing this pamphlet to Fielding as Lewis Wiggin does (The Faction of Cousins [New Haven, 1958], 3n).
3. See, for example, the issues of August 1,2,1740.

associates and which, of late, had grown foggier - hence the allusion to the 'libel' of pre-dramatic days[1] - because of the heat-generating exertions of the club-swinging Hercules Vinegar. This fact takes away much from the authenticity of Monsieur B___'s Historical View. But, still, one has to admit that it is not altogether a tissue of lies and half-truths invented according to the need of the hour. There is an air of plausibility about some of the things mentioned in the pamphlet and a few interesting and useful inferences can be drawn from them. The inferences that I would like to draw and particularise are:

i. That, Walpole and Fielding knew each other much before the latter "set up for a play-writer".

ii. That, from the very beginning there was a certain amount of familiarity between them.

iii. That, this familiarity was not exactly of the same type that usually subsists between a patron and his protege.

v. That, Fielding had discovered at quite an early stage that the best and surest way of earning a living was by 'libelling' Walpole.

vi. That, Walpole, even after knowing (from Fielding's own mouth) that he had made this dangerous discovery, did not consider it worth his while to prevent him from pushing "his natural

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1. Forgetting the contingency Fielding's 'libel' was supposed to meet, H.P. Vincent suggests (MLR. XXXVI, [1941], 499-500) that it was 'one (or both) of the bantering poems on Walpole'. In my opinion the incident mentioned in the pamphlet was related to Fielding's first major political play, The Welsh Opera. Evidently, the author of the pamphlet was not a good chronologist.

turn for ridicule and satire" any further by providing him with an independent and permanent means of livelihood.

I would not take each and every word of 'Monsieur B____' for a gospel truth but the conclusions drawn above from his account of Fielding's relations with Walpole during his first few years in London do not look improbable.

About the Welsh Opera nothing in particular is to be said here since the fact that Fielding maintains a neutral attitude in ridiculing Walpole and his opponents is questioned by none. The accentuated satire of the Grub-Street Opera, too, needs no discussion at this stage because the original impartiality of the author is not much impaired by it (how much it is, we have already seen in Chapter V). It is the next point, the belief that Fielding stopped ridiculing Walpole on joining the Drury Lane Theatre that requires to be examined a bit more closely. Once again everyone seems willing to endorse the view first presented by Cross that because of the prescriptive loyalties of the Drury Lane Theatre (and Fielding's own sympathies with the 'Patriots'!), Fielding had to keep political satire religiously out of his plays as long as his association with this theatre lasted.[1] This point of view, to say the least, is utterly misleading. First of all the very assumption that the Drury Lane, being a Theatre Royal, could not but be loyal to the party

1. Cross I, 114.

in power is open to question. To my mind its allegiance to Walpole and his faction was by and large of a dubious nature and the roots of its loyalty to him did not go very deep. The patentees and the managers of the theatre of course desisted from bringing on its boards plays which were blatantly critical of the Administration or of the Royalty, but they were by no means so consistently scrupulous about making some profit at their cost as we have been told to believe. A fleeting glance at the repertory of this theatre for the period under consideration will make this fact sufficiently clear.[1] Secondly, the plays of Fielding that were staged at this theatre (even those which he had translated from Moliere) are not completely devoid of political satire. Though undoubtedly chastened by the steps taken by the government against his Grub-Street Opera and the company of actors rehearsing it, and, perhaps, a bit restrained by the discreet timidity (I would not call it political loyalty) of the managers of the theatre, he showed little hesitation in inserting subtle innuendoes upon the Prime Minister, his colleagues, his policies and even upon the royal family whenever an opportunity offered itself. Since we have examined the political contents of these plays in the earlier chapters it would be quite unnecessary to cite illustrations for this observation afresh. But two facts must be re-emphasized: first, that with the exception of the Historical Register and Eurydice Hiss'd, most of the plays of

1. See in particular the performances of Henry VIII, Beggars Opera, The Unlucky Favourite, The King and the Miller of Mansfield, Cato and Venice Preserv'd. Most of these plays were performed at the command of Frederick, the Prince of Wales.

Fielding were written for the Drury Lane Theatre - those which were eventually staged elsewhere were almost always rejected by the managers for reasons other than political;[1] and second, that the last play of Fielding staged at the Drury Lane before he set up his own "scandal shop" at the Haymarket, the revised Author's Farce, contains much more pointed and personal attack on Walpole than any other play of his barring the two mentioned above.

The next three points, namely, the dedication of the Modern Husband, the resemblance between this dedication and that of Orestes and the attacks of the Grub-Street Journal have been considered elsewhere and the reasons for my reluctance to attach much importance to them fully explained.[2] None of these facts, to my mind, marks any significant departure on the part of Fielding from his original attitude towards Walpole. Nor do the dedications of Don Quixote in England and Universal Gallant. One single derisive remark on Walpole in one and the utterly harmless nature of the other (except for one vague allusion in Don Quixote, the plays themselves have no direct hit on the prime minister) hardly make Fielding a greater and more violent critic of Walpole than what he had already been for a number of years. One may regard these two dedications as Fielding's overtures to the Opposition (this point will be discussed later) but not as manifestations of any suddenly conceived dislike for Walpole.

1. See Cross (I, 74, 178) and Dudden (I, 45, 126, 170) on the rejection of the Temple Beau, Don Quixote, The Wedding Day and Pasquin.
2. See above, pages 45-57.

My chief aim in examining the above evidences was to show that the inferences drawn from them can be questioned, but not to deny the basic and irrefutable fact, namely, Fielding's acquaintance with and indebtedness to Walpole. Walpole may or may not have shown special kindness to him by bailing him out of the prison, he may or may not have gone to the Haymarket Theatre repeatedly with the sole purpose of indicating his softness for the author of Tom Thumb, and Fielding may or may not have libelled him outside his plays, but there is absolutely no room for doubting either Fielding's presence at Walpole's levees or his having benefitted, to some extent, from Walpole's generosity. On this particular score I would, therefore, quarrel neither with the author of the Historical View, nor with James Mitchell, the untiring adulator of Walpole, who included Fielding's name in the list of those who were dancing attendance upon his patron.[1] Nor would I frown upon the anonymous author of the lines printed

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1. See Mitchell's A Familiar Epistle to the Rt. Honourable Sir Robert Walpole, concerning Poets, Poverty, Promises, Places, and C. (1735), in which, laying claim to being the most vocal and patient of the poets who ever paid homage to Walpole, Mitchell asks him rhetorically, 'Your Praises who has better sung' and then proceeds as follows:

   - Pardon is begg'd of Messieurs Young,
   Tibbald and Welsted, Fielding and Frowde,
   And fifty more who round you crowd.

   These lines, and those quoted in the following note, have, to my knowledge, remained unnoticed so far.

in the 248th issue of the Grub-Street Journal in which it was alleged, quite correctly, that, among others, Fielding and Pope were both under obligation to Walpole, though the nature and the extent of the favours received by Fielding are not so definitely known as of Pope's.[1] All that I would like to say in this connection is that Fielding's visits to Walpole did not last for long and that, though he may have received more attention from Walpole than what a young man of 19-20 (I place these visits in 1725-27) could reasonably expect, they, as his allusions to Walpole's levees show, did not leave very pleasant memories in his mind. For having waited on Walpole at all, Fielding needs no apology, for it was perhaps the most natural and logical thing for him to do. Apart from the fact that at that time the steps of every person endowed with the slightest urge to make a name or

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1. See the Nos. 247-49. In the first of these numbers (for Sept. 19, 1734) a poetical composition 'On Wit' was published where it was maintained that in all ages every 'prop of State' patronized men of wit according to his own parts. To illustrate this point, reference was made to Halifax's patronage of Congreve, Addison and Prior, Godolphin and Harley's of Swift. After this came a gibe on Walpole:-

   > And so the Primier [sic], who had next the Staff
   > Smil'd on Concanen, Cibber, Mitchell, Ralph.

   a rejoinder (the one I have referred above) to this allegation appeared in the issue of Sept. 26, 1734 (No.248), from which I quote a few lines:

   > Silence, rude scribbler; nor with envious spite,
   > Bark, like a dog, at bards thou canst not bite.
   > What tho' Concanen, Cibber, Mitchell, Ralph,
   > Are smil'd, by the Primier with the Staff?
   > So Pope, Young, Welsted, Thompson, Fielding, Frowde,
   > Have, each by turns, to his indulgence owed.

   Though containing a grain of truth, the above statement was not allowed to go unchallenged and in the next number of the Journal (October 3, 1734) the 'lad', the author of the above lines, was angrily asked to substantiate his allegation if he was not speaking ironically. The lad didn't. (For all that we know, these verses may have come from the same hand).

fortune could not avoid stamping upon the path that led to the great minister's residence, Fielding had special claims on him. He was a scion of a noble family, a near relation of his staunch supporters like Lady Mary Montagu, Earl of Denbigh[1] and General Charles Churchill,[2] and, above all, a product of the same school at which Walpole had studied and which, now, was being run by his class-fellow and a very close friend, Henry Bland. From Henry Bland, Fielding, like his other distinguished school-fellows (William Pitt, George Lyttelton, Henry Fox and Charles Hambury William), had imbibed an ardent fervour for Whiggism and, from the same source, he may also have imbibed a certain amount of reverence for the great Whig leader. We do not know much about his first two years (1725-1727) in London but it seems quite likely that immediately after his arrival in the metropolis he started making calls on Walpole with a view to pay his respects and secure his protection. These courtesy-cum-business calls must have been made quite frequently, for during this period Fielding's need for a safe and secure employment was at its greatest. At this moment he probably had no other plan in his mind than to

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1. Denbigh, who represented the other and better placed branch of the Fieldings (or Feildings), remained loyal to Walpole up to 1734. The occasion of his desertion of the Court party is mentioned in the verses printed in A New Miscellany for the Year 1734, from which I quote the following:

   W(alpole) this charge to noble Denbigh gave,
   Or quit your pension, peer, or be a slave.
   Dare to be poor, replied the Belgian dame,
   And take what monarchs cannot give thee, fame.

   The 'Belgian dame' is of course Lady Denbigh, one of the toasts of Rumpsteak Club, though she was not a Belgian but a Dutch.

2. Gen. Charles Churchill's father was related to Fielding through his wife, Mary Gould.

enter into the services of the great minister and, if he so wished, write on the 'themes' 'prescribed' by him. But, as stated earlier, Walpole's response, from Fielding's point of view, was cold and discouraging. The favours which he was prepared to show, and which he probably did show, were not enough for Fielding. His smiles, promises and occasional gifts of "ready money" instead of winning him Fielding's gratitude only served to make Fielding lose his faith in him. And this happened at a fairly early stage. The fact that Fielding soon decided to carve a career for himself and turned his mind to the stage - to equip himself better for which he made a journey to the Netherlands - indicates that unlike Gay, Eustace Budgell and scores of others, he did not live under the illusion of obtaining a decent living from Walpole for any extraordinary length of time. By this I do not mean to suggest that his visits to Walpole ended abruptly the very day he began writing his first play or that they were never renewed after Fielding's return from Leyden in 1729, but I do feel that by 1730 they must have become less and less frequent, for by then Fielding had not only started speaking of the "hollow" promises of the "statesman" and showing his repugnance for his levees but ridiculing and 'libelling' him as well. One may say, as the author of the Historical View ... did, that Fielding's "impudence" and need would still have induced him to present himself before the prime minister and seek his assistance and forgiveness. But, in view of the fact that Fielding continued to make fun of Walpole in one play after another from

March 1730 right up to May 1737, it does not appear very likely. Moreover, the question of the futility and ethical propriety of these visits apart, there was a weightier reason to prevent Fielding from calling on Walpole any longer. The sheer impossibility of attaining any success on the stage while retaining the stigma of being attached, no matter how remotely, to Walpole and the Court - which he must have realized much before the damnation of Captain Boadens' play[1] - would have made it imperative for Fielding not to strengthen but to get rid, as much as he could, of the reputation he had acquired as Walpole's protege.

But such a reputation once gained is not easily got rid of. Mitchell's lines (quoted earlier) show that even as late as 1735 Fielding was being counted among Walpole's satellites. Mitchell's statement may not be literally true - by the time it was made Fielding had definitely stopped singing Walpole's praises - but it does indicate that even after the Dedication of Don Quixote no severance of ties between Walpole and Fielding was recognized in Walpole circle. In the face of Fielding's persistent ridicule of Walpole it would be wrong to assume that in 1734-35 the relations between the two were as smooth and cordial as they were in the late twenties. But, at the same time, they do not seem to

1. Charles Macklin, the famous actor of the second quarter of the 18th century, referring to the damnation of 'A Word to the Wise' (by John Kelly) and the Modish Couple (1732) - which was written by John Hervey and the Prince of Wales but presented under the name of 'Captain Boarding' (Boadens, a place-man in Frederick's household) - speaks of the lingering, deep-seated animosity of the audience for the authors attached to the Court party (Memoirs and Life of Charles Macklin, Esq. [Lond. 1799], II, 362). We shall have more to say of Captain Boadens' play in the next chapter.

have reached the breaking point either. I believe very firmly that though Fielding and Walpole had drifted apart over the past few years, the final breach between them was made neither at the time when Walpole had rejected Fielding's services, nor at the time when they were supposedly offered to the Opposition, nor even when, to the annoyance of the Ministry, Pasquin had become a rage with the public, but some time in the earlier half of 1737 - in all probability after the appearance of the Historical Register and Eurydice Hiss'd. Strange and even preposterous it may sound but there is a good bit of secondary evidence that can be produced in support of my viewpoint. First of all, there is the undeniable fact that up to February 1737 Fielding had not become persona non grata at the Drury Lane Theatre where his plays were not only being continuously staged but also advertised as "by the author of Pasquin". Secondly, the visits of Walpole's supporters, like the Earl of Egmont,[1] to Fielding's theatre and their whole-hearted admiration for his hilarious pieces. Thirdly, the non-suppression of any single play of Fielding after the Grub-Street Opera, though of late he had become increasingly unrestrained in his criticism of the government. Besides, one

1. Egmont is generally regarded as an independent member of the Lords, but it is a mistaken view. Judging purely from his conduct in the House, where he always supported Walpole, one would say that his neutral and independent views were almost entirely confined to his Diary, though no doubt he did frequently parade them (in private) before Walpole in order to have better terms from him. Egmont visited Haymarket in 1736-37 at least five times (See Egmont, II, 240, 250, 268, 390, 511). He saw Pasquin thrice, Historical Register twice and Eurydice Hiss'd (with Hist. Register) once. If the report that Fielding's last plays 'drew crowds from Grosvenor, Cavendish, Hanover and other fashionable Squares' (An Apology for the Life of Mr. T.... C.... [1740], 92) is true, quite a few courtiers must have paid visits to Fielding's theatre. Most probably 'The Adventurer in Politicks' (John Hervey) was one of them.

has also to keep in view the freedom allowed by the authorities to the Haymarket Theatre during Fielding's managership to carry on its activities without any let or hindrance from their side although in the recent past they had been so officious and prompt in harassing and persecuting its actors whenever they tried to stage or rehearse a play which carried, or was supposed to carry, any reflection on the administration. The attitude of the ministerial writers towards Fielding is also to be noted; and noted most particularly. From the days of Fielding's first forays into contemporary politics up to the very end of his dramatic career they kept clear of him. Fielding's criticism of the government brought no rejoinder, no protest from them.[1]

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1. The earliest reference to Fielding was made in a dialogue published in the Daily Gazetteer of 14 April 1737 in which he was mentioned (not by name but as the author of the Historical Register) as one of the two dramatists (the other was the author of the Miller of Mansfield, Robert Dodsley) Lyttelton was accused of having recruited for the Opposition. In an earlier number of the Gazetteer (9 March 1737) Dodsley was vehemently denounced but Fielding, who had staged Dodsley's play at his theatre only a week before, was spared (Dodsley's play was first performed at the Drury Lane Theatre; for the amusing fact that Dodsley enjoyed the patronage both of Walpole and of the Opposition, see Davis, Lyttelton, p.56 and Ralph Straus, Dodsley, 41-3). The Gazetteer made its frontal attack on Fielding only on 7 May 1737, six and four weeks after the first performance of the Historical Register and Eurydice Hiss'd. Why this time lag? Surely, the offensiveness of the plays had not increased with the passage of time. I believe that during this period in particular very strenuous efforts were made to 'recruit' Fielding for the ministry. (The delayed publication of the two plays - advertised for 'the next week' in the Craftsman of 30.4.37 but published only on the 12th of May - also suggests that some behind-the-scene activities were going on). Probably these negotiations were brought to an end on 6 May 1737, when Fielding distributed gratis a new song - called 'The Politicians' - by way of an epilogue to the Historical Register. On the following day John Hervey published his letter in the Daily Gazetteer.

About the ensuing controversy between Fielding and the Gazetteer not much is to be said except that the allegations of ingratitude on the part of Fielding were made only after Fielding

They simply refused to take any notice of his activities. All these facts are, to my mind, of no inconsiderable importance and each one of them points towards what I have stated above and would now re-state thus: that Robert Walpole, who had shown some indulgence to Fielding in the past remained more or less indifferent towards him for the best part of the fourth decade. He was not in the least disturbed by Fielding's attacks on him and his administration.

What was the reason behind Walpole's insousiance? Was it a product of his characteristic sang froid or of his singular relish for adverse publicity or of his willingness to let Fielding earn his bread at his cost? I believe all these factors had some part in making Walpole's attitude towards Fielding what it was between 1730 and early 1737. But it originated somewhere else - in his inherent belief that he would find little difficulty in silencing Fielding. He prided himself on his ability to fix everybody's price and, in the case of Fielding, a struggling author who had himself offered his services in the past, he was probably more than convinced that he would be able to buy him off whenever he wanted to. Had he

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had referred to the 'employment' offered to him by the ministry 'whenever he would write on that side' (Dedication, Hist. Register).

In its answer to Fielding's statement, the Gazetteer made no mention of the 'employment' but it did accuse Fielding of attempting to 'wipe off' the obligations that he owed to the ministry simply by disclaiming them (Daily Gazetteer, 4.6.1737). Later on, when Fielding became more specific and started speaking of Walpole's attempts to bribe him in order to make him suppress the 'masques drawn to the life' and desert his friends (the Champion 10.12.1739, 14.2.1740 and Preface to Of True Greatness), the ministerial writers came out with their counter-charges and mentioned not only the incident of Fielding's imprisonment but also his offers to the ministry, the offers which were rejected on the ground of his 'low' morals (The Daily Gazetteer 30.7.1740 & 1,2.8.1740). How much truth these allegations contain, one will never find out. But the point that I have made - that in 1736-37 there were some negotiations between Fielding and Walpole - is inferrable both from Fielding's statements and from those of his opponents.

felt otherwise, had he suspected (as Dudden suggests he did[1]) that a 'sinecure' could not silence Fielding, he would no doubt have acted differently. In any case he would not have missed the opportunity offered by John Barnard's bill of1735, which, needless to say, would have made Fielding's tampering with politics almost impossible. The fact that he gave Fielding full liberty to push his "natural turn for ridicule and satire" to its extreme indicates, in my opinion, the depth of this conviction. And the need to put this conviction to test arose in March 1736, when Walpole saw Fielding's Pasquin greeted with universal applause. One cannot be very positive in such matters but I do feel that from this moment right up to the day the "Adventurer in Politicks" published his first letter in the Daily Gazetteer, Walpole did make quite a few bids for Fielding's allegiance and that this letter was published and other punitive measures were taken only when the futility of his efforts had fully dawned upon him.

The conclusions that I have drawn are, I admit, purely hypothetical and to a great extent partial to Fielding too, since they give credence to his version of the story - that in 1736-37 Walpole had offered bribes to him. But the facts that have been mentioned above admit of no other plausible explanation.

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1. Vol. I, p.81.

Furthermore, when we consider the predicament Walpole was reduced to in those years, when we look at the steadily rising tide of popular resentment against him and the sheer inability of his hacks to stem it, and when we think of Walpole's willingness, I should say eagerness, to have Fielding on his side even after he had joined hands with his enemies publicly and played havoc with his 'politricks', these assumptions become more and more credible. The harassed minister who was driven to the extremity of soliciting the assistance of a pugilist like Lady Mary Montagu[1] (not to mention Theophilus Cibber) may as well have felt tempted to win over her more talented kinsman once he had demonstrated the prowess and effectiveness of his caustic pen. And in this he could very justifiably entertain high hopes for though the 'caustic pen' had written much against him, it had, as "the Adventurer" rightly pointed out in his second letter, rarely refrained from rendering his Opponents "equally laughed at". At any rate, Fielding had not yet espoused their cause openly and an attempt to wean him from them (granting that he had moved closer to them) was much more worth making now than ever before. As I have said above, I feel very strongly that such an attempt was made, though not by Walpole personally and directly, but through intermediaries, such as Lady Mary herself, or Charles Hanbury Williams, Fielding's friend and Walpole's devoted follower, and, also, that Fielding did not respond to it favourably.

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1. Lady Mary edited a ministerial paper, The Nonsense of Commonsense, in 1737-38.

At this stage I must hasten to add, lest Mr. Battestin takes any umbrage, that from the preceding remark it is not to be inferred that I subscribe to the view that Fielding was a "paragon of political integrity".[1] To maintain that would involve not only repudiating what I have said earlier but also disregarding Fielding's later conduct and confessions. But, at the same time, I do believe that a distinction can be made, and it should be made, between Fielding the journalist and Fielding the playwright, particularly the playwright of the post-Pasquin period. At the moment overtures from Walpole's side were made he was totally a different person. Having reached the height of his popularity both as a playwright and a theatre-manager, he had come to realize that no man of wit could please the Administration and the people, now poles apart, at one and the same time, and also that no man in his senses would consider the offers of the one, no matter how alluring and promising, preferable to the esteem and adulation of the other once he had obtained them. Later in life, after his close contact with the people and the media through which that contact was established and retained were lost to him, he may (as he certainly did) act otherwise, bothering for consistency neither in his reactions to the day-to-day events nor in his views and attitudes. As a hack-writer battered by fortune and hard-pressed by circumstances, he could, with every justification and little compunction, change

1. PQ XXXIX [1960], 39-55.

the sides and hire out his pen to anyone who would pay for it, whether a group of enterprising booksellers, or a set of disgruntled politicians or a desperate minister or a despiteful, obstreperous duchess. But not as a popular dramatist; for in that capacity (irrespective of a few inconsequential dedications) he would not pay homage to or vindicate the cause of the individuals but of the people at large for whose amusement and instruction he wrote all his plays and to whom he dedicated the most important of them.[1] As early as June 1730 he had asked for their support in his fight against corruption and abuse of power[2] and it was now, rarely before and perhaps never after, that it was made available to him in fullest possible measure. At this stage, when his cherished dream of youthful days was beginning to materialize, he would think not of surrendering his independence or of putting any curb on his activities and potentialities but of broadening and re-building his little theatre which for him and for a majority of his countrymen had become a national theatre in the truest sense of the word.

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1. Hence it is that he could say in the Dedication of Tumble-Down Dick that he 'never yet yielded to any mean or subservient solicitations of the great men in real life' (Works III, p.424). To me this statement and what is said of Honestus in Eurydice Hiss'd - that he did not flatter Pillage 'in his prosperity' (Works III, 418) - do not appear unjust and unacceptable if applied strictly to Fielding the dramatist. So far as his conduct as a free-lance journalist is concerned, Fielding himself provides a rationale for it in the 17th number of the Jacobite Journal.
2. Prologue to the Coffee House Politicians (Works I, p.357).

It would be in the fitness of the things to bring this section to a close with a brief discussion of the fluctuations in the tone and tenor of Fielding's criticism of Walpole. At the very beginning of the second chapter while expressing my view that Fielding in resolving to make Walpole a prominent and permanent target for his satire was not moved either by any personal animus or by any public zeal, I had qualified it by using and underlining the word 'initially'. And that, I believe, was quite necessary for I did not mean to suggest that Fielding continued catering to the 'political prejudices' of the people without ever coming to identify himself with them or that he continued hitting at the Prime Minister only because it pleased others and brought money to him and not because, after some time, he himself began to look upon it as a sacred public duty and found special gratification in discharging it.[1] But what is most surprising is the fact that this 'initial' phase covered a major part of Fielding's dramatic career as it lasted almost up to the days of Pasquin. The concern for the people is not totally absent in the plays written in this period but in none of them was it the raison d'etre of Fielding's attacks on Walpole. In fact one doubts if it would be quite correct and proper to apply the word 'attack' to the treatment meted out to Walpole in these plays; for in all of them - particularly in the Author's Farce, the Tragedy of Tragedies, the Grub-Street Opera -

1. See above, page 29.

he does not censure or reprimand him, he simply ridicules him. And much of this ridicule is heaped on Walpole the man and not the minister. It is his personal foibles and personal affairs that get the particular attention of the dramatist rather than his 'ministerial' activities. His greed, his vainglory, his jealous and amorous nature, his conjugal troubles, his cuckoldom and his paganism are referred to again and again and that too in a facetious and playful manner without any touch or trace of malice, or ill-will or indignation. Throughout this period Fielding's intention seems to have been to present Walpole neither as an object of derision nor of admiration but just as a figure of fun, a laughing-stock. This fact becomes obvious the moment we think of the characters that were made to resemble or represent Walpole - Punch, Tom Thumb, Robin and (to a limited degree) Gregory. Even while speaking of the specific political issues and policies with which Walpole was concerned, Fielding did not reveal any anger or frenzy comparable with that of the outraged 'patriots'. He disapproved of them no doubt but his subtle sneering allusions can hardly be deemed as outright denunciations. So far as Walpole's public life was concerned, Fielding had, apparently, laid down a code of conduct for himself for the period under review - and that was not to add fuel to the fire; or, in other words, to reap benefit from Walpole's unpopularity but not to do much to render him more unpopular. This is best explained by his behaviour during the

Excise crisis. As long as the hue and cry against Walpole's scheme persisted, he did not utter a single word about it; and when he did start alluding to it, which was several months after the crisis, he employed a tone which was just sufficient to keep the people in mind of the nefarious intentions of the 'Projector' but not forceful enough to revive the popular clamour against him. On this issue, as on others, his sympathies lay clearly with the people but he was not prepared to go whole hog with the more extremist elements among them. One can, therefore, say that from 1730 to 1736 Fielding exercised a certain degree of reserve and restraint in criticising Walpole and his sneers and gibes upon him, being almost always of a mild and harmless nature, maintained a uniform pitch.[1] His transformation from a light-hearted lampoonist into an inspired and determined critic of the great man was a sudden affair. He did not evolve into one.

That his criticism of Walpole assumed new dimensions in the final year of his playwriting is not a matter of dispute. In all the plays written after Pasquin (with the sole exception of Eurydice) there is not only a shift in emphasis but a change in the very nature of the strictures passed on Walpole. How distinct and marked this shift and this change are, one can easily

1. The Modern Husband is the only exception. But it was written under exceptional circumstances, at a moment when Fielding's sense of injury, occasioned by Walpole's neglect, was still fresh.

find out by placing the afore-mentioned set of characters along with Quidam and Pillage; or by considering the fact that the very same scheme of Walpole (the Excise scheme) which could draw only some casual and venomless comments from Fielding in earlier plays became the object of his sustained and withering attack in his last play, Eurydice Hiss'd. Walpole's private life and weaknesses of character, which served Fielding's purpose well so long as he was interested only in making sport of him, ceased to be proper subjects for his satiric muse and, accordingly, pushing Walpole the man into the background, he focussed his attention on his shortcomings as the head of the Administration. His inaptitude for running the government, his blunders in tackling the foreign and domestic affairs, his disregard for the healthy and wholesome features of national life and culture, his promotion and propagation of false values and ideals, his lack of interest in social problems and contempt for his own countrymen, his corruption of public life and overall stagnation of the administrative set-up under him[1] - these became not only the frequent themes but the only themes of his plays. Evidently, Fielding, whose interest in the activities of the prime minister had never flagged but who had hitherto shown not much inclination

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1. Although in his first 'Adventurer' letter (Daily Gazetteer, 7 May 1737) Hervey took exception to Fielding's observations on Walpole's humdrum administration his own assessment was virtually the same as Fielding's (see Memoirs, II, 364). For Winston Churchill's criticism of Walpole's 'sordid, sleepy Government', under which 'all that was keen and adventurous in the English character writhed', see his A History of the English-Speaking People [Lond. 1957] Vol.III, pp.95-103.

to correct or punish him, had all of a sudden become convinced that Walpole, with his corrupt practices and faulty measures, was actually polluting and poisoning the very well-head of the society and the hour to bring him to the whipping-post - nay, to remove him from his high office - had arrived. Whether this conviction was wholly a result of the tutelage of Fielding's friends like Chesterfield, Pitt and Lyttelton or of his own independent observations one does not know, but the trenchant satire and indignant tone of the last few plays, particularly of the Historical Register and Eurydice Hiss'd, make it perfectly plain that Fielding had come to consider it incumbent upon himself, as a responsible and influential citizen of the country, to contribute more than his mite towards what he now regarded a national cause, namely, the ejection of Walpole from premiership.

The shift, as said above, is obvious. Fielding's attitude towards Walpole, which had been more or less indifferently critical in the past, had suddenly hardened. Instead of bantering and ridiculing him, he had begun to attack him in all seriousness and with all his might. He had a set purpose, a definite goal before him and he pursued it with determination and zeal. Almost overnight he had become one of the most dangerous and potent critics of Walpole and his administration. Much of his assessment and understanding of the talents and capabilities and performances of Walpole were no doubt influenced by the Opposition propaganda; but, still, he did not attack Walpole

indiscriminately, as the Opposition did. One reason for this difference was that though his aim, incidently, had become indistinguishable from that of the members of the Opposition, he was not impelled by the same motives and impulses. He had no axes to grind, no old scores to settle, no personal grievances (in 1736-37) to satisfy. Consequently, his bitterest pronouncements on Walpole lack the rancour which one finds in the words of the Opposition spokesmen. Instead, there is an air of frankness and genuinely-felt disappointment about them which makes one suspect - since there is nothing in his plays to falsify his claim that he opposed Walpole entirely on ethical and constitutional grounds and judged his policies and measures purely on their apparent merit - that for Fielding (as for David Hume[1]) opposition to and removal of Walpole had become a cruel necessity and he would perhaps have actually felt relieved if Walpole had mended his ways and ceased to act in an arbitrary and unconstitutional manner. He would no doubt have felt much pleased if, taking his advice and forgetting his narrow ends, he had considered the larger interests of the nation of paramount importance and turned his attention to those social evils which were crying for reform.[2] The amount of ridicule

1. See Hume's note on Walpole in his Essays, Moral, Political and Literary (Oxford, 1963), 27-28.

2. Words of sincere advice to Walpole are to be found even in the Champion. See, for example, the issue of 19.2.40 in which Walpole is asked to reform the debtors' law and thus gain 'some real friends while alive, and some admirers after ... death'.

that Fielding had heaped on Walpole will surely not allow us to agree with him that he had all along been a well-wisher and friendly critic - or adviser - of Walpole, but the utterances and conduct of Honestus and the (almost) apologetic observation of Spatter[1] in the last play of Fielding leave us in no doubt that but for the provocative letter of 'the Adventurer in Politics', the scurrilities of the Dedication of the Historical Register would have never come out of the pen of their creator.

B. Fielding and the Opposition Party

Fielding's first definite overture to the Opposition, most critics agree, was made sometime in April, 1734, when he dedicated his recently staged play, Don Quixote in England, to the Earl of Chesterfield. The method employed by Fielding to ingratiate himself with the Opposition in general and Chesterfield in particular was nothing if not "diplomatic". Three months earlier he had published The Intriguing Chambermaid in the dedicatory epistle (addressed to Mrs. Clive, the actress) of which he had introduced a complimentary sentence on the great earl, "one of the finest judges [of drama] and the greatest man of his age". After having prepared the ground in this fashion, he produced Don

1. Commenting on Pillage's levee, Spatter says it is 'the mean ambition of being worshipp'd, flatter'd, and attended by such fellows as these [Pillage's levee-hunters]' which leads ' men into the worst of schemes'. This statement provides an explanation for Walpole's conduct; the emphasis is on his error of judgment.

Quixote, which with its insinuations on Walpole fully revealed that "the author's sympathies were with the Opposition". Finally came the "laudatory dedication" of the play itself in which Fielding lavished eulogiums on the champion of "liberty" and "true patriotism" and "the most favourite offspring of the British muses". He phrased the dedication in such a manner as to convey to Chesterfield the broadest possible "hint that he was ready to place his wit and humour at the disposal of the Opposition". The dedication, however, "produced no immediate result". "But the author's implied offer of service was duly noted by the 'Patriot' leaders, who were glad to avail themselves of it later on".[1]

The next overture to the Opposition from Fielding's side was made roughly ten months later, in February 1735, when he dedicated yet another play, The Universal Gallant, to the Duke of Marlborough, one of the leading spokesmen of the Opposition in the House of Lords. This dedication was the last of its kind, although after Universal Gallant he wrote another five plays and dedicated three of them, one, ironically, to John Rich and two, gratefully, to the "public". Between February 1735 and April 1737 he paid no tribute to the Opposition leaders (or, for that matter, to any prominent individual) in the shape of an effusive dedication. But this deficiency was compensated otherwise. He offered, besides his talents, his theatre in the Haymarket to

1. Dudden, I, 133-34; see also Cross I, 160.

Walpole's enemies and made it, "in appearance if not in reality, an adjunct of an aggressive Opposition".[1] From this theatre he did "brilliant work" for "his party" for two years,[2] allowing others to stage their anti-ministerial pieces and producing his own highly "partisan" plays like Pasquin, Historical Register, and Eurydice Hiss'd. For these services he was "rewarded with the friendship of George Lyttelton, William Pitt, the Earl of Chesterfield and the Duke of Bedford".[3] Two of them, Chesterfield and Lyttelton, indeed felt so obliged to Fielding that they named their journal, Common Sense, after one of his characters in Pasquin. The nomenclature of Chesterfield and Lyttelton's journal was both "a compliment to Fielding and [an] acknowledgment of their shared objectives".[4]

This is the verdict of modern critics. Its contradictions are obvious. Fielding's Pasquin, Historical Register, Eurydice Hiss'd and even Don Quixote are presented both as an evidence of Fielding's friendship with the Opposition leaders and as so many steps taken by him to achieve that friendship. Even if we ignore this very palpable contradiction and examine the two suggestions separately it would not be difficult for us to see that neither of

1. Cross, I, 226.
2. Ibid., 218.
3. Loftis, 134; Cross, I, 226.
4. Loftis, 134. Edgar V. Roberts is of the opinion that even in 1731 'Fielding was a virtual spokesman for the Opposition' (see his article on Fielding's Deborah in the Bulletin of the New York Public Library, LXVI [1962]).

them provides a satisfactory answer or basis either for Fielding's treatment of the Opposition in his plays or for the attitude of the leaders of the Opposition party towards Fielding. But they both, however, do provide an answer and a basis for Fielding's treatment of Walpole, and I feel that most of the critics, while forming their views about Fielding's political loyalties, have taken this particular feature of Fielding's satire more into consideration than any other. Hence the weakness of their argumentations.

My submission is that as long as Fielding continued to write for the stage there always was some distance between him and the Opposition party. I do not mean to deny that over the last few months of his dramatic career he had moved a bit closer to some members of that party. In the face of increasing boldness of his attacks on Walpole in the later plays, in the face of the allegations made in the ministerial press and in the face of Fielding's own (though somewhat qualified) admissions, it would be simply foolish to make any such denial. But, at the same time, Fielding's almost continuous ridicule of the Opposition party, his zeal in exhibiting its weaker aspects, his refusal to present and popularize the positive and presentable side of its propaganda, his failure to offer any three-dimensional image of a 'true patriot' cannot be easily ignored. These facts - and a few others to be mentioned shortly - indicate most emphatically that Fielding had not drawn so close to the Opposition as to surrender completely that

independence of judgement which he prized so highly and the want of which, in others, he regretted so deeply. As he himself did not hesitate to own, there were no doubt some individuals in the Country party whom he genuinely admired, some whom he respected and some with whom he had ties of friendship. To a very great extent he sympathized with their professed views and wished them well in their inspired and (apparently) honest campaign against Walpole's corrupt administration. But to say that he blindly allowed himself to come under the spell of their propaganda and become their mouthpiece, or what Hervey called a 'Catspaw', 'An Engine', 'a Squirt' in their hands is, I think, carrying the point too far. The support that Fielding gave to his 'friends' or 'patrons' was a bit too tenuous to make these epithets sit squarely on him.

The first thing to be considered is of course the so-called 'diplomatic' method that Fielding is supposed to have employed to attract the attention of the Opposition leaders - the indirect but fairly obvious compliment to Chesterfield in the Intriguing Chambermaid and the dedication of Don Quixote. As regards the former there is not much to say except that it does not appear to be based on any calculations and ulterior considerations. It is simply an admission of fact, a well-deserved tribute to one whose "attic wit", erudition, wider interests in fine arts had indeed made him one of the "finest judges" and, in that respect, "the greatest man of his age". Moreover, the fact that this ingenuous

compliment to an all-accomplished individual does not mark the initial stage of Fielding's 'diplomatic' moves can be gathered from the poem that Fielding allowed to be published with the Intriguing Chambermaid. This poem, "occasioned by the revival of the Author's Farce", was sent "by an unknown hand" who, paying tributes both to Fielding and Walpole, had hoped that the latter, "studious still of Britain's fame", may yet provide the former with "ease and affluence" so that he may raise, on the "theme" prescribed by Walpole, "More noble trophies to [his] country's praise".[1] There is no need to attach any particular importance to the sentiments expressed by an anonymous poetaster but, still, one feels that if the compliment to Chesterfield was meant to convey any message or hint to him, and to the Opposition, then it was very undiplomatic on Fielding's part to publish this poem with the Intriguing Chambermaid.

If the publication of these verses with the Intriguing Chambermaid was undiplomatic, the dedication of a play like Don Quixote to an Opposition leader was much more so. As shown earlier, the political scenes of this play deal not with the ministerial corruption (the Don who speaks like a courtier is only suspected to be a Court candidate, but he is not) but with the corruption and malpractices of the Opposition party itself. These scenes were not likely to (nor perhaps designed to) win

1. Works, III, 7-9.

for Fielding the protection and the gratitude of the Opposition, and Chesterfield's inexplicable silence reveals that he and the other Opposition leaders, to whom "general corruption" only meant the ministerial corruption, were not in the least pleased by the play. But it certainly pleased the town; and it also pleased one of the greatest supporters of Walpole, the Princess Royal (now Princess of Orange), at whose command it was staged at Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre on October 1, 1734. This last fact indicates, as nothing else does so strongly, that despite its dedication Don Quixote was not considered a 'party play' in the Court or ministerial circles.

The motives attributed to Fielding in dedicating this play to Chesterfield also require some discussion. This dedication, so it is said, was inspired by two considerations: first, to take revenge on Walpole for his denial of patronage, and second, to provide for himself for the future by making a timely "appearance as a party writer ... at a time when the prospects of the Opposition appeared to be at their brightest".[1] That in 1734 Fielding was not on good terms with Walpole is a fact which cannot be questioned. The sharp hits in the dedication of the play show plainly that he was really very angry with Walpole. That these hits were occasioned by a sense of personal injury - the injury received at the time of the dedication of the Modern Husband - is something with which I have to differ in view

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1. Woods, 17.

of what I have said about that dedication. Even if we assume for the sake of arguing that the dedication of Modern Husband was seriously meant to obtain Walpole's patronage it would be hard for me to subscribe to this viewpoint. The very idea that Fielding silently pocketed the insult when it was offered, waited patiently for Chesterfield's dismissal and allowed, very considerately, no less than thirteen months to him to get adjusted to the new political environments before he gave vent to his outraged feelings does not stand to reason. If Fielding had any injured feeling, if he had really felt offended by the way Walpole had responded to his dedication, there was no need for him to keep his anger pent up so long. What he did in the early months of 1734 he could have done in the early months of 1732 as well and dedicated any of his several plays (surely his association with the Drury Lane would not have been a hindrance)[1] to any of Walpole's several enemies, either to Chesterfield himself who even when in office was as much opposed to Walpole as when out of office, or to Bolingbroke, to Pulteney, to Hervey's "Mount Etna", the Walpole-detesting Duchess of Marlborough, or to the well-known patrons of the slighted Gay, the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry. Because he did not do any such thing during the period that intervened between the two dedication, one may feel justified in not considering personal animus (caused by personal insults) as a raison d'etre for the offensive remarks made on Walpole in the dedication of Don Quixote. Besides, offensive

1. After all the Universal Gallant, which was staged at Drury Lane, was dedicated to the Duke of Marlborough.

though these remarks are they refer to that notorious aspect of Walpole's patronage system to which Fielding had alluded in the plays written much before the dedication of the Modern Husband was thought of.

The other suggestion - that by dedicating Don Quixote to Chesterfield Fielding wished to identify himself with the Opposition in order to benefit from its expected triumph at the hustings - is one which may not find much support from the facts of history. The modern scholars like Namier, Plumb, Foord and Wiggin have shown that in eighteenth-century England, the fate of a minister depended not on the results of a general election but on the support he enjoyed from his royal master. To a very large extent the results of an election were determined by this factor. The more the closet influence the more the chances of a minister's obtaining a majority in Parliament; and we all know how fortunate and how successful Walpole was in this respect. The outcome of the 1734 election was, therefore, a foregone conclusion. Everybody - including the two budding politicians, William Pitt and George Lyttelton[1] - knew that Walpole was going to retain both his majority and his office. On the eve of the general elections his downfall was not at all expected in the

1. For the interesting information that as late as the fall of 1734 neither Pitt nor Lyttelton had foreseen a career of opposition to the ministry, see R.M. Davis, Lyttelton, pp.32, 36, 45. See also Basil Williams' William Pitt (p.48) for Pitt's approval of his favourite sister Anne's decision to cast her lot with the Court party and become, in 1733, a Maid of Honour to Caroline.

Opposition camp (hence their despondency)[1]. The only time when the "prospects" of the Opposition really appeared to be "at their brightest" was in the spring of 1733, during Excise crisis, but the fact has been noted that throughout this crisis Fielding did nothing to improve his relations with that party by harassing Walpole. Because Fielding remained silent on that occasion, because he deliberately let the best opportunity of doing any useful service to the Opposition slip, because he dedicated his play to Chesterfield and not to any of those recognised and established leaders of the Opposition - such as Pulteney or Carteret - who were more likely to replace Walpole, one feels that he was not all that eager to offer his services to the Opposition party in general as some of us believe. The dedicatory epistle of Don Quixote contains evidence not so much of Fielding's wish to identify himself with that party as of his sincere desire to organise an independent movement for cleansing the body-politic of all its impurities. And he addressed this epistle to a person who because of his unsullied reputation appeared most suitable for leading such a movement.[2]

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1. See Hervey, Memoirs, I, 256.

2. Of course, as in the case of Modern Husband, one cannot be very sure about the motives that inspired this dedication. But these motives must have been more than one and of a very complex nature - their complexity arising from Fielding's personal circumstances, his political convictions, the pressure of his friends as well as from the political developments (in this case, the dismissal of Chesterfield). One dedication which does not appear to have any such complexity and which probably had no political significance, is that of the Universal Gallant. Fielding dedicated this play - which had failed on the stage - to a man (Duke of Marlborough) who was more remarkable for his open-handedness than for his consistency in political attachments (According to Timbs [Anecdotes, I, 8] the Duke had joined the Court party on the suggestion of Henry Fox. After some time he

The fact that Fielding neither in 1734 nor in the following three years had any great inclination to be fully identified with the Opposition is, in my opinion, best shown by his attitude towards Frederick, Prince of Wales, who, by the mid-thirties, had become the supreme head of the Country party and, in that capacity, was receiving the attention of every leading member of that party. Bolingbroke, Pulteney, Carteret, Chesterfield, Cobham, Dodington, Lyttelton, Pitt, all paid homage (in most cases just a lip service) to him and vied with one another to secure a place of prominence amongst his favourites. Bolingbroke wrote his Idea of a Patriot King to instruct and flatter him. Chesterfield and Cobham courted his friendship with a view to immunize him against the overtures of Pulteney and Carteret. Lyttelton worked hard to gain his confidence and became, eventually, not only his most trusted confidant but his secretary as well.[1] Pitt eulogized him in his maiden speech in the Commons and, when sacked by Walpole, got a living from him, becoming his Groom of Chamber. The literatti, too, who had come under the influence of the Opposition, sang his praises in verse and prose. Glover, Mallet, Thomson and Brooke, taking a cue from Bolingbroke, hailed him as the saviour and the last hope

left that party simply to propitiate his grand-mother Sarah Churchill, the Duchess of Marlborough. In 1738 he again went over to the Court party and remained loyal to Walpole throughout the remaining period of his premiership).

1. Phillimore, 51; Johnson, Lives of the Poets, III, 47.

of the country and received ample rewards from him. Hammond, Akenside and Young celebrated him in their writings and benefitted from his munificence.[1] Amongst the seniors, Swift and Pope both took pains to show their "respect, honour, esteem and veneration" for "his princely virtues" and one of them (Pope) exchanged both visits and presents with him.[2] There was not a single individual who had any connection with the Opposition party and who did not pay homage to its royal patron. Only one person failed to do so and that person was Henry Fielding who has been called "par excellence ... humorist and satirist" of that party.[3]

If Fielding was the Opposition party's par excellence humorist and satirist he should have been, as a matter of course, par excellence panegyrist of Frederick as well. But not a word of praise came from the 'patriotic' pen of Fielding for a 'patriotic' prince. Fielding's refusal to eulogise Frederick could be considered (with some difficulty) an act of omission, an oversight if only Fielding had totally ignored the prince and not cast aspersions on him in his later plays, particularly in Pasquin and Tumble-Down Dick. His sarcastic allusions to Frederick's marriage, his ridicule of the "monstrous preparations" (according to Mrs. Pendarves) for its celebration, his insinuating suggestion that this marriage would restore harmony between the two political

1. See Johnson's Lives of the Poets, edited by G.B. Hill (Vol.II, 313, 392; Vol.III, 291, 292, 378, 391, 404, 406, 448), Grant's Thomson, Hessler's Literary Opposition to Walpole. Aaron Hill and Richard Savage were equally devoted to Frederick but for some unknown reason they did not get much encouragement from him.
2. See Pope, Correspondence, Vols. III (p.500) and IV (pp.48,109,139, 170,178 and 181). See also Pope's Poems, Vol.IV,pp.306,316,337,361.
3. Cross, I, 218.

camps and bring about a sort of 'coalition of parties' clearly show that even in 1736 Fielding was quite ready to treat the Prince's affairs disrespectfully.[1] Obviously, Frederick's demagogic antics, his sedulous efforts to court people's affection, his patronage of the Opposition wits, his friendship with Lyttelton and his hostility to Walpole had done very little to lessen Fielding's initial contempt for him.

Since Frederick was idolized by the Cobham group, Fielding's ridicule of him also indicates that at least up to the time of the composition of Pasquin and Tumble-Down Dick he had not become what Laprade calls a "protege" of that group.[2] Whether or not he attained to this position in the following months is a moot point. For about a year after he had staged the above two plays he remained mostly inactive (in the creative sense) and the first play (Eurydice) which he produced after this period of inaction was not of a political kind.[3] Along with Eurydice he was also writing another play (Jupiter's Descent on Earth) which, as its few scenes show, was developing into a political satire; but he left it incomplete.[4] It has been suggested that during this period, January-March 1737, Fielding was busy organising his company

1. For these allusions, see the following chapter.
2. Public Opinion and Politics, pp.370-80. One may mention here that Pasquin was 'sketched out' during Fielding's long vacation at East Stour, which lasted from March 1735 to early 1736 (Cross, I, 177). Throughout this period Fielding may not have been easily accessible to the 'Patriots'.
3. Eurydice, however, does contain some satirical allusions to George II and his consort.
4. These scenes were published under the title, An Interlude between Jupiter, Juno, Apollo, and Mercury. The reason given for the non-completion of Jupiter's Descent is the failure of Eurydice (Cross, I, 386).

of actors at Haymarket and, by way of "preliminary skirmishes", staging anti-ministerialist plays on its boards.[1] But when we look at the plays that were produced at Haymarket at this time we find that out of twenty not more than three had a political bias.[2] The rest were totally harmless (one or two which were not, had already had their run elsewhere). Obviously "the Treaty of the Haymarket to which "the Great Mogul" had graciously acceded had no binding clause with regard to the presence of political satire in the plays that were to be performed at the Little Theatre.[3] If this theatre ever became "a focus of boisterous opposition gaiety"[4] in 1737, it must have been during the exhibition of Fielding's own exhilirating plays, the Historical Register and Eurydice Hiss'd. There is no evidence whatsoever that it enjoyed the patronage of the 'Patriots' in the first two months of its operation.

And even for the next two months, March 21 to May 23, it cannot be safely assumed that Fielding's theatre was more popular with the 'Patriots' than with the non-patriots; or that it received more encouragement from them than any other theatre of London. The great patron of the 'patriotic' band, Prince Frederick,

1. Avery, Emmet L. 'Fielding's Last Season with the Haymarket Theatre', MP, XXXVI (1939), 283-92.
2. These three were: The Fall of Bob, alias Gin, The Mob in Despair and A Rehearsal of Kings. These plays were not published and whatever information we have about them is derived wholly from the surviving play-bills.
3. This 'Treaty' was made public only on March 8, 1737.
4. Loftis, 136.

paid his first visit to this Theatre only on 18th April 1737; and although he immensely liked the "strong passages ... in favour of liberty",[1] he did not care to exhibit either his approbation of the two pieces (Historical Register and Eurydice Hiss'd) or his enthusiasm for the Little Theatre ever again. Nor did he show it that very special favour which he was showing to the Drury Lane and Covent Garden Theatres - ordering command performances.[2] He did, however, allow his story of his relations with his parents to be advertised for Fielding's theatre but that clearly was a favour (if it was a favour) to its assistant manager, James Ralph, who had dramatised the story.[3] From the fact that The King and Titi was to be staged at Haymarket it does not necessarily follow that a radical change had taken place in Frederick's attitude towards Fielding or in Fielding's attitude towards Frederick.

Besides these two events - Prince's visit to Haymarket and the advertisement of The King and Titi - which are not of much significance, and the expected presence of the Duchess of Marlborough at Haymarket on 23 May 1737[4] there is no concrete

1. Egmont, II, 390.
2. Between 21 January 1737 and 27 April 1737 thirteen performances were advertised as 'By Command of His Royal Highness'; eight of them were for Drury Lane and the rest for Covent Garden.
3. The King and Titi was to be staged on 30 May 1737.
4. Daily Advertiser, 23 May, 1737.

evidence that Fielding received any extraordinary support from the Opposition or that his theatre became a favourite resort of its members. However, it can be taken for granted that most of them did go to see Fielding's vastly popular pieces and, like the Prince, they did not fail to applaud the "strong passages" in them. But what puzzles one most is that they did not applaud them outside the theatre. Those of them who were in the habit of recording their sentiments, their reactions to the important events of the day, have left not a single word either about Fielding, or about his plays or even about the licensing of the stage. Similarly, the journals of the party - the Craftsman, Common Sense - make no mention of his plays (barring one or two paid advertisements). The first number of Common Sense did contain a compliment to Fielding and to one of his plays, Pasquin, but afterwards neither this paper nor the Craftsman printed any acknowledgment that Fielding's "objectives" were the same as its own, or that he was rendering any service to the Opposition.[1] They contain no evidence that Fielding had become their useful and much valued ally and his theatre an organ of the party. Pasquin was already there but the demand that it "should be acted in every Borough in England" on the eve

1. Of course Common Sense did allow Fielding to publish his letter in the issue of 21 May 1737. But the editor of the paper, Charles Molloy (or Chesterfield and Lyttelton) himself wrote no article in defence of Fielding and his later plays. The articles which were published against the Licensing Act in this paper and in the Craftsman had more to do with the fear of the Opposition (expressed by Chesterfield in his speech on the Licensing Act and by Thomson in his new edition of Milton's Areopagitica) regarding the eventual extension of the Act to the Press than with Fielding.

of elections did not appear in their columns until quite very late.[1] Nor did the cry - "let Cibber write for the Court, and Fielding for the Country".[2]

To my mind, it would not be quite fair to say that Fielding's activities at Haymarket indicate a rapport, a collusion, a deep understanding between him and the Opposition. The dramatist who until the very end of his career ridiculed the main features of Opposition propaganda (for example, the coalition of parties and frequent parliaments), totally ignored its most positive contribution to the political thought of the century (the idea of a patriot king), made fun of its popular slogans and themes, exposed its weaknesses, questioned the motives of its leaders and raised laughter at them (Hervey found evidence of it even in Eurydice Hiss'd - see Appendix) can hardly be called a hireling or a spokesman of the party. His only contact with the Country party was through three or four persons for whom he had utmost regard. But this regard for these men of superior "Genius, Learning and Knowledge" was not a recent growth, a by-product of "shared objectives". And devoted though he was to these capable and promising men - that is Chesterfield, Lyttelton and Pitt - the first half of 1737 seems rather too early a date to say that he had "devoted his pen to their political fortunes".

1. Common Sense, 28 October 1738.
2. Ibid., 1 April, 1738.

For if he had, nothing would have been more logical for him than to wait upon his influential friends and ask for an alternative employment once Walpole's "irate hand" had fallen upon him. But he did nothing of the sort. Lord Hervey who was already at a loss to know the exact nature of Fielding's relations with the 'Patriots' must have felt all the more baffled when Fielding closed his "scandalshop" without a whimper weeks before the Licensing Act became enforcible[1] and bent his way neither towards the audience chamber of Frederick, nor towards the parlours of Chesterfield and Lyttelton, nor towards the offices of the Craftsman and Common Sense, but towards the Middle Temple, in search of another independent means of livelihood.[2]

One may not find it quite easy to reconcile Fielding's varying personal relations with Walpole, Chesterfield, Lyttelton and Pitt with the treatment he accorded to their respective parties but this treatment was perfectly in keeping with his views

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1. The Licensing Act became law on 21 June 1737 but Fielding stopped staging plays at Haymarket within two or three days of the introduction of the bill.

2. Those who maintain that Opposition utilized Fielding's services in 1736-37 (Cross, I, 160; Dudden, I, 133-34) have not been able to account for Fielding's decision to study the law and join the Bar. They suggest that the presence of Nicholas Amhurst and Charles Molloy prevented Chesterfield and Lyttelton from making any further 'use of his talents' (Cross, I, 239; Dudden, I, 234). But this is simply ridiculous. If places could be found for Thomson, Mallet, Hammond and others, Fielding could also be easily provided for.

on the party politics of his day. He was convinced in his heart that not much difference lay between the policies, objectives and tactics of the Whigs and the Tories. "Better herring", as he said repeatedly, was to be found neither in one "barrel" nor in the other.[1] The welfare of the people, social reforms and larger interests of the country were matters of as little concern to the 'Patriots' as to the 'Politicians'. Corruption, bribery, nepotism, pursuit of sordid ends and all the other evils associated with the men in power were equally attractive for their opponents. Introduction of healthier and purer elements in public life, though preached from the roof-tops, was not the object the leaders of either side were after. Political ideologies, constructive programmes, well defined attitudes towards domestic and external problems, the factors which give a particular colour and reputation to a political organization, were as conspicuously absent in the Country party as in the Court party. The difference between them was confined to their labels and slogans which had ceased to signify anything. Similarity in intentions and actions and total absence of principles (not to speak of the presence of the Jacobites in both camps, most of whom had become "very good whigs" without ceasing to be Jacobites)[2] had made the two sides indistinguishable. The struggle between them was not the struggle between two different

1. Works, II, 91; III, 299. It is to be noted that Fielding's favourite maxim - 'Better Herring is in neither Barrel' was cited both by the Grub-Street Journal (22.4.1736) and by The Daily Gazetteer (4.6.1737) as an evidence of his contempt for the two parties.

2. Ibid., III, 287.

sets of people dedicated to two distinct causes but a struggle between 'ins' and 'outs', between haves and have-nots. And it was a mad struggle, carried on through slander, accusations and mud-slinging. With 'ins' mad after staying in office and, thus, ruining the state and 'outs' mad after mending it in their own fashion,[1] this struggle, to a detached observer, looked like a vast harlequinade enacted by one group at the Court and by another in the Country.[2]

This harlequinade, this frenzied struggle for power Fielding found quite enjoyable in every respect but one - that un-informed, unsuspecting people took it seriously and got involved in it though they had nothing to gain from it. As a result of this involvement they lost the power of judging things rationally and coolly. "Party and prejudice" (rather party prejudice) were in play in every stratum of society. They carried everything before them and had "dominion" over every single individual.[3] Fair and impartial assessment of issues and even of people had become impossible. Opinions were formed not on the basis of what a man was but according to his political affiliations. If one asked "a man's character of one of his party" he would be presented as "one of the worthiest, honestest fellows in Christendom"; if asked

1. Works., III, 127.
2. Ibid., 448.
3. Ibid., I, 291; II, 192.
4. Ibid., II, 192.

"of one of the opposite party", he would be described as a "worthless, good-for-nothing ... dog".[1] Under the influence of party propaganda, for most people fair had become foul and foul, fair. They had ceased to discriminate between the two. Fielding abhorred this widely prevalent tendency of looking at things through coloured, party glasses and presented an entirely different criterion. In a song given with The Temple Beau (in which he had rejected both Whigs and Tories) he said:

> The man who by reason
> His life doth support,
> Ne'er rises to treason,
> Ne'er sinks to a court.
> By virtue, not party,
> Does actions commend;
> My soul shall be hearty
> Towards such a friend.[2]

This may sound somewhat high-faluting but the ideal that this stanza enshrines had very special fascination for Fielding and he never fully gave it up. An independent mind, which did not follow party lines, was something he set high value upon and, like his Honestus, he did show a certain amount of consistency in applauding what was commendable and in hissing at that which was not, hoping that others would follow suit and a time would come when the cursed 'way of carrying things by friends' would disappear and none

> Shall come prepar'd to censure or applaud,
> But merit always bear away the prize.[3]

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1. Ibid., II, 192.
2. Ibid., I, 275.
3. Ibid., III, 412.

CHAPTER VII

MISCELLANEOUS POLITICAL SATIRE

A. The Royal Family

> Cobler: Say, why, what d'ye think I say? I say,
> All Men are married for their sins,
> And that a Batchelor Cobler, is happier
> than a Hen-peck'd Prince.

These lines appeared on the title page of the Welsh Opera. The insinuating nature of the dictum is fairly obvious but it is further elaborated in the Preface of the play, which contains some general observations on "Petticoat government" and "Curtain lectures" and the following statement: "we have known in history that even Sovereign Princes have not been exempted from such Female Furies". These words may not have come from the pen of the author of the play but they certainly contain a viewpoint which he fully endorsed. Like most of the well-informed people of his time Fielding was aware that, in the royal household "the grey mare was the better horse", and he alluded to the fact not only in the Welsh Opera but in a number of plays as well.

The first allusion to this situation - that is, to the domination of Caroline over George II - occurs in the Dramatis Personae of the Tragedy of Tragedies where King Arthur is described as one who "stands a little in fear" of Queen Dollallolla, " a woman ... a little too much a virago towards her husband".[1] In

1. Works, I, 457-8.

the play itself, however, the Queen does not appear either as a virago or as a dominating wife. She has a tendency to get into a passion and carry her point in smaller matters but in affairs of greater consequence Arthur, a hectoring personality, flatly refuses to yield to her wishes. Always conscious of his supremacy, he takes undue pains to assert himself as often as he finds an opportunity to, since he believes

Now by ourself,
We were indeed a pretty king of clouts
To truckle in her will - For when by force
Or art the wife the husband over-reaches,
Give him the petticoat, and her the breeches.[1]

He would much rather prefer to avoid quarrelling with her but he abhors the very idea of being considered a weak-kneed, submissive sort of a husband tied to the apron strings of his wife. In this respect he is totally different from Sir Apshinken (of Welsh Opera and Grub-Street Opera) who follows the policy of least resistance for the sake of obtaining some sort of conjugal harmony. Sir Apshinken feels that "a man of [his] estate" should not "stand in fear of his wife" but like "many an honest gentleman" who have to come willy nilly under "Petticoat-government" - "a very lamentable thing indeed" - he has reconciled himself to his fate.[2] An easy-going, affable person, he does not

1. Works., I, 471.
2. Ibid., II, 59.

suffer from the delusions of Arthur and has, therefore, voluntarily withdrawn from all affairs. He has "resolv'd not to interfere with her [management of] family" if she does not interfere with his "pipe". His motto is "let her govern while I smoke" and he observes it punctiliously, not caring in the least if his wife "vents" her "ill-nature on all the parish".[1] It is only when she gets into a tantrum with him and, making a virtue of a necessity, taunts him with the "offers" she had refused for the sake of "a sleepy good-for-nothing drone" like him that Sir Apshinken finds hard to hold his tongue.[2]

King Arthur and Sir Apshinken's attitudes toward their wives represent, respectively, the fictitious and actual side of George II's relations with his wife. Arthur's determination not to yield to DollaDolla clearly alludes to the King's groundless conviction that he was the real master, a conviction which both Caroline and Walpole had helped to build up.[3] The dominance of the Queen is

1. Works., II, 62, 104.
2. Ibid; the allusion is to Caroline's refusal to marry the Catholic Archduke Charles. In Sedition and Defamation Display'd (1731) Caroline was praised for rejecting 'the Grandeur of this world for the sake of true Religion' but, according to Peter Quennell, 'it was not her religion so much as the speculative and irreligious tendencies she had imbibed from the Queen of Prussia that stood her in good stead - that what she feared to lose was less her Protestantism than her independence' (Caroline of England, 16-17).
3. On this, see Hervey's Memoirs (I, 45, 68-70; II, 496-97). The Game of Chess (in the Craftsman of 15.9.1733), the Vision of the Golden Rump (Common Sense, 19, 26.3.1737), and the following extracts:
   (i) You may strut, dapper George, but 'twill all be in vain;
   We know 'tis Queen Caroline, not you, that reign -
   You govern no more than Don Philip of Spain.
   Then if you would have us fall down and adore you,
   Lock up your fat spouse, as your dad did before you.

again glanced at in the moral of the second Act of Mr. Trapwit's comedy in Pasquin (the moral is the same as that of the Grub-Street Opera -"we are all under petticoat government")[1] but mentioned more pointedly in Eurydice and An Interlude. In the former play a very striking resemblance is to be found between the court of the "infernal majesty", Pluto, and that of George II; the point of resemblance being (apart from the fashionable immorality of the Courtiers) the great influence of the consorts of the two kings, Proserpine and Caroline. Throughout the play Proserpine is shown as keeping her husband constantly under her thumb. She has an independent will which prevents Pluto from ever having the liberty of interfering with her affairs. He has no right to "prescribe" to her what she should or should not do. It is rather Pluto himself who takes orders from her and acts according to her whims and wishes. All the favours (to supplicants) which appear to come from him actually come from her. His role is simply to rubber-

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(ii) Since England was England, there never was seen
So strutting a King, and so prating a Queen.
(Both (i) and (ii) are quoted by Hervey, Memoirs, I, 69-70).

(iii) This Lady fair, with Harpy's claws,
Who all things to her centre draws;
And sways with universal Rule,
Yet keeps the secret from the Fool.
(Tit for Tat [1734]).

In her Account of the Court of George I, Lady Mary Montagu had the following to say on Caroline: '[she] had that genius which qualified her for the government of a fool, and make her despicable in the eyes of all men of sense' (Works, I, 133-34). For Bolingbroke's reference to 'the Carolinisation of England' and Pope's to 'the gynocracy' of Caroline and Mrs. Howard, see Sichel, Bolingbroke, II, 270. The phrase, 'the grey mare WAS the better horse' also occurs in the preface of Thomas Cooke's The Mournful Nuptials (1739).

1. Works., III, 281.

stamp the decisions which she has taken and "signify [her] pleasures" to all concerned.[1] Pluto's odd conduct is noted particularly by the new arrivals (like Spindle) who are surprised to find that "in hell the grey mare is the better horse"[2] and also by the "Critic" who, failing to find any basis for it in the customary descriptions of the underworld, asks the author why he has "made the devil hen-pecked".[3] The answer which he gets seems to satisfy him. He is told -

> Sir, you know where I have laid the scene, and how could hell be better represented than by supposing the people under petticoat government?[4]

This explanatory remark extends the equation of the two courts to the respective dominions of Pluto and George II. England becomes comparable with the infernal regions mainly because a clever and ambitious woman, not content with the settlements made in her favour, has out-witted her husband and "worked him out of" whatever was left to him.[5]

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1. Works., III, 401.
2. Ibid., 389. Weazle's comment on this is also worth noting. He says, 'Yes, faith! Jack, and no where else, I believe'.
3. Ibid., 395.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., 402. The above phrase occurs in a statement of Proserpine. Speaking to Eurydice, who has 'out-witted' her husband and returned back to Hades, she says:
   > You see, my dear Eurydice, the manner in which I live with my husband. He settled one half of the government on me at my marriage, and I have, thank fate, pretty well worked him out of the other half: thus I make myself some little amends for his immortality.

   If we substitute 'immortality' with immorality (and cruelty) the passage would be worthy of being incorporated into Hervey's Memoirs (For this aspect of Caroline's conduct, see Memoirs, I, 253-5, 261-3; II, 457, 496-504.)

The four scenes of An Interlude between Jupiter, Juno, Apollo and Mercury, "originally intended as an Introduction to a Comedy called Jupiter's Descent on Earth", provide some of the reasons behind Jupiter's decision "to make a trip to the earth". One of them is Juno's "tongue". She is a bit of a scold and Jupiter, unable to correct or pacify her, has made up his mind to leave her for some time and enjoy the "godlike company" of human beings (this he has gathered from the 'Dedications'). But "the true reason of this expedition", the deities suspect, is not "the great virtue of mankind" but "the little virtue of womankind". He is an honest "fellow" but not "in regard to women". Because of this weakness, no "maid of honour" is safe in the Elysian Fields; nor any woman on earth, whom he likes immensely - particularly, if Juno is to be believed, the "trollops ... such as Venus converses with".[1]

The passages cited above deal with that side of George II's character which Fielding had ridiculed in earlier plays as well. Jupiter's descent to earth was probably designed to refer to the King's extremely unpopular visits to his "bawdy-houses" in Hanover. His most recent visit, which kept him away from England from May 1736 to January 1737, had caused much discontent among the people and occasioned a series of lampoons and squibs.[2] Fielding himself

1. Works., VIII, 59-68.

2. See, for example, the following advertisement stuck on the gate of St. James's Palace:
   Lost or strayed out of this house, a man who has left a wife and six children on the parish; whoever will give any tidings of him to the churchwardens of St. James's Parish, so he may be got again, shall receive four shillings and six pence reward.
   N.B. This reward will not be increased, nobody judging him to deserve a Crown. (Hervey, Memoirs, II, 610).

ridiculed it in the Historical Register by drawing a parallel between his absence from England and King Theodore's from Corsica. With the exception of this indirect allusion, Historical Register contains no reflection on George II's amorous nature. But other plays, as I have said earlier, have quite a few allusions of this type. In the Tragedy of Tragedies he is shown falling in love at first sight though he is not sure the "sudden pain" which he feels in his "breast" is caused by love or just by "wind-cholic".[1] In the Grub-Street Opera, Sir Apshinken, "a thorough epicurean philosopher", does not behave as a gallant, but we are told (by his wife) that their philandering son, Owen, is only following his father's footsteps.[2] The resemblance between Jupiter of Tumble Down Dick and George Augustus has been noted earlier.[3] Among other things which make them identifiable with one another is their lasciviousness. Jupiter's fondness for women, particularly for the wives of others (as described in the play) represents, to a certain extent, George II's inclination to have intrigues with married women.

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1. Works., I, 467-8 and 489-90.
2. Ibid., see Pope's lines on George II, Frederick and the 'charming Hell fires', the Six Maidens:
   O! Sure to King George 'tis a dismal disaster,
   To see his own Maids serve a new Lord and Master.
   Yet this, like their old one, for nothing will spare,
   And treateth them all, like a Prince of the Air.
   (Poems., VI, 342).
3. See above., p.120, n.3.

Apart from George II's amorous nature Fielding has touched upon a few other minor traits of his character as well. His tendency to blow hot and cold alternately can be seen in Arthur's changeable moods; his parsimony in his (Arthur's) concern for the difference in the prices of "arrack punch" and "rum and brandy" as well as in his grant of a paltry amount - six pounds - to the debtors; his preference of low company in Sir Apshinken's fondness for his graceless parson and, also, in Pluto and Jupiter's predilection for liars and 'great' criminals; his punctuality in Phoebus' precise movements. The picture that emerges from these allusions and from the ones considered in preceding paragraphs is not a likeable picture, but, at the same time, it is not very damaging or distorted either. As a matter of fact they make one feel that Fielding had no serious intention of satirizing him. And this feeling becomes all the more intense when one takes into account Fielding's efforts to find redeeming features in George II. Apshones' compliments to Sir Apshinken - that

> Sir Owen hath still behaved as the best of landlords; he knows a landlord should protect, not prey on his tenants - should be the shepherd, not the wolf to his flock.[1]

Lady Apshinken's complaint that her husband "would keep a tenant's table by his consent" and "would suffer some of the poorer tenants to eat more than their rent out";[2] and Mercury's comments on Jupiter -

1. Works., II, 98.
2. Ibid., 106.

that

> His own honesty makes him the less suspicious of others; for, except in regard to women, he is as honest a fellow as any deity in all the Elysian Fields ...[1]

All these statements show that Fielding had some regard for the king. But, still, this regard was not of the same kind which, a few years later, made him say: "the cause of King George is the cause of liberty and true religion..[and] of common sense".[2] Jupiter, though the greatest, was still "far from being the wisest of the gods."[3]

For the Queen, Fielding does not appear to have had any kind feeling whatsoever. He did not exactly despise her but he was certainly not favourably impressed by her extraordinary qualities which had helped her acquire great influence over her husband and, consequently, over the administration of the country. Like most of his contemporaries, he did not approve of her tampering with politics and he was probably convinced that the alliance between her and Walpole augured no good for the nation. He alluded to this alliance in the Tragedy of Tragedies and in the Grub-Street Opera, but (unlike Opposition writers) without descending to scurrilities. It seems he was more critical of her personal foibles and pretensions than of her political exertions. Of these foibles those which received particular attention of Fielding were her

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1. Ibid., VIII, 68.
2. Tom Jones, VIII, ix. (Works., VI, 484).
3. Works., VIII, 68.

notorious frugality, her greed, her sophistry and her interest in literary, religious, and metaphysical subjects. Lady Apshinken's instructions to her kitchen-maid,[1] her request to the parson to deliver a sermon on "religious" and "irreligious" charity, and procure books on the same subject from London at "cheapest rate", her concern for the morals of the tenants, her meditations on "ways to propagate religion in the parish"[2] and her belief that she was beginning to understand "Latin as well as English"[3] together with the allusions to Merlin's Cave in Pasquin[4] were designed to reflect upon various aspects of her non-political activities. Fielding's estimate of Caroline's character was neither fair nor accurate, but it does not appear to be much influenced by the Opposition propaganda.

Of the six children of George II and Queen Caroline, Fielding has taken notice only of the problem child, Frederick, whom he treats with utmost freedom. In Grub-Street Opera he presents him as a despicable, graceless young dandy whose chief occupation is pursuit of women. He "lusts after every woman" he sets his

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1. See Lovegold's instructions to his cook in The Miser (III,iii; Works., II, 434-35) and Swift's following lines:
   Our frugal Queen to save her meat
   Exalts the heads that cannot eat.
   See also Pulteney's ironical praise for Walsingham 'who celebrates Sir George Briton's Lady for her Parsimony, and laying up as much as she can, to provide for her younger children ...' (A Proper Reply, p.19).
2. Compare Lady Apshinken's concept of 'charity' with Peter Pounce's (Joseph Andrews, III, XIII; Works, V, 322) and her fondness for theological discussions with Slipslop's (Joseph Andrews, I, iii; Works., V, 29).
3. For these references, see Works, II, 105-07, 107-8, 61, 93, 108.
4. Works, III, 277, 318.
   See The Crafts of the Craftsmen (1735) in which any ridicule on 'Merlin's Cave' is regarded a disrespect to the Royalty.

eyes upon, rumages "all the playhouses for mistresses", makes "mischief between ... men and their wives", has seduced a "fiddler's daughter" and ruined the reputation of many an innocent girl.[1] He is particularly keen to be a bit "too familiar with the maids" of her mother all of whom treat him with extreme insolence.[2] Only one of them, Margery, responds to his amorous appeals but she too will vouchsafe him no great favour until he is in a position to pay her handsomely. He is just "half a man" and yet he allows his "desire" to outstep his capacity.[3] Owen himself is aware of his limitations. "When once a woman knows what's what, she knows too much" for him.[4] He really does not mind "to venture on a woman after another" but the trouble is he cannot find a woman who would care for him twice.[5]

The above passages deal with certain specific amorous adventures of Frederick - such as his affairs with the daughter of a playhouse "hautboy" called La Tour, with an opera singer[6] and with the Maids of Honour, in particular, with Miss Vane.[7] Some of

1. Works., II, 66, 81-82, 98.
2. Ibid., 61, 66, 114-117.
3. Ibid., 63, 66.
4. Ibid., 62.
5. Works., II, 62.
6. Egmont, I, 92-93.
7. For this affair, see Hervey's Memoirs (I, 290; II, 476-83), Egmont (I, 218).

them allude to his reputed impotence.[1] Lady Apshinken's fear that she may shortly "hear of a marriage not much to [her] liking" probably refers to Frederick's intention to marry Diana Spencer, a granddaughter of the Duchess of Marlborough.[2]

Sarcastic allusions to Prince Frederick, as I briefly mentioned in the last chapter, are present in two later plays of Fielding, in Pasquin and Tumble Down Dick. In the former play Fielding has not only ridiculed the Prince's marriage but also expressed his opinion about the possible consequences of this marriage. Towards the end of Trapwit's comedy Lord Place is shown sending invitations to his "brother candidates", Sir Harry and Squire Tankard, to come and spend the "night in feast and merriment" with him. This sudden reconciliation between the two opposing sides, that is the Court and Country Parties, comes as a surprise to Mr. Fustian who cannot help asking "What has made these two parties so suddenly friends, Mr. Trapwit?" To this very pertinent query Trapwit gives the most convincing answer - "What, why the marriage, Sir; the usual reconciler at the end of a comedy."[3] The marriage which creates harmony between fierce antagonists could not possibly be the marriage of the colonel; the allusion is clearly to Frederick's coming marriage. By means of this incident (Colonel Promise and Miss Mayoress' marriage) Fielding was expressing

1. For Queen Caroline's doubts regarding her son's capability to consummate his marriage, see Hervey's Memoirs (II, 614-18).
2. Walpole is given credit for preventing this match (Horace Walpole, Reminiscences, 75).
3. Works, III, 299.

doubts about the future conduct of the Prince and those dissidents who were trying to accomplish the same feat which Walpole and Townshend had accomplished in 1719 - to effect an understanding between the King and the heir-apparent and, in the bargain, find places for themselves.

Frederick's marraige is ridiculed more particularly in the second part of the play, in Fustian's own tragedy. There, the invasion of Queen Ignorance and the defeat and death of Queen Common Sense signifies, in a general way, the chief feature of Walpole era, but, more particularly, the extraordinary preparations that were being made to celebrate the royal wedding. Handel, for personal reasons, was foremost among those who arranged special entertainments for the occasion. He had hitherto been the "pet aversion" of the prince, and, to propitiate him, he took great pains.[1] Weeks before the marriage he had "engaged several of the finest singers in Italy" to entertain Frederick and the Princess. Fielding, whose hatred for the foreign entertainers had never abated, satirized their expected arrival, and that of the Princess, in the following lines:

> Queen Ignorance is landed in your realm,
> With a vast power from Italy and France
> Of singers, fiddlers, tumblers, and rope-dancers.[2]

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1. Newman Flower, Handel (1929), pp.196-97.

2. Works, III, 310. These lines were reproduced in a print called 'The Judgment of the Queen of Common Sense. Address'd to Henry Fielding Esqr.' The editor of the B.M. Catalogue of Prints and Drawings commenting on the above lines and the print, says: This is illustrated, and part of the motive of the satire declared, by a notice in The Daily Advertiser of Friday, April 9, 1736, to the effect that 'Mr. Handel has engaged

Yet another, and much more obvious, fling at Frederick and his wife (or wife-to-be) is to be found a few pages later where Queen Ignorance, who has fixed her standard in the vicinity of Handel and John Rich's theatre (that is, Covent Garden Theatre, Handel had joined it in December, 1734), is shown accepting and then magnanimously returning the presents which the two theatres (Covent Garden and Drury Lane) had sent through their ambassador, Harlequin, who is of course John Rich himself. Expressing her gratefulness to them she says:

> Take back their hostages, for they may need 'em;
> And take this play, and bid 'em forthwith act it;
> There is not in it either head or tail.
>
> . . . . .
>
> The Modish Couple is its name; myself
> Stood gossip to it, and I will support
> This play against the town.[1]

On the face of it this allusion to The Modish Couple looks quite irrelevant. There seems no reason why Fielding should have singled out that play (for which he himself had provided an epilogue) which had been hissed out of the stage four years ago. Queen Ignorance's command to Harlequin that this damned, stupid, "dull comedy" be acted forthwith appears pointless since it had never been considered worthy of a revival. In March-April 1736 neither

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> several of the finest singers in Italy, who are expected next week, in order to perform operas for the entertainment of Her Highness the future Princess of Wales'.
> (Prints and Drawings, III, i, pp.200-3; for a similar notice in The Old Whig of 15.4.1736, see Deutsch, Handel [1955] p,404).

1. Works., III, 320.

Covent Garden nor Drury Lane was contemplating to give it another chance. The only possible reason for its being mentioned by Fielding at so late a date could be his desire to cast aspersions on the real author (or part author) of the play,[1] Frederick, whose coming marriage was expected (at least by Fielding and a few others) to normalize his relations with his parents - and thus put an end to his patriotic role - and provide a real 'modish couple' to the society.[2] This allusion to The Modish Couple was, therefore, meant to ridicule both Frederick's literary and political pretensions and his marriage.[3]

The multiple considerations that led Fielding to write Tumble-Down Dick have obscured the fact that besides John Rich,

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1. This play, as mentioned elsewhere, was advertised in the name of Captain Boadens, but was a product of the joint efforts of Prince Frederick and John Hervey. Although Fielding, and others, continued referring to it as 'Captain B——'s play' (Joseph Andrews, III, vi; Works, V, 281) the fact that Frederick had a hand in it was an open secret (See, for example, Egmont, I, 205).

2. See another print (Prints and Drawings, III, i, 184-85) which, satirizing Frederick's marriage, showed the royal couple, Captain Boadens and Miss Vane. Underneath the print, the following lines were printed:

   View here Three different states in real Life
   The Pimp, the Miss forsaken and the Wife
   The Happy Pair with Mutual Transport Smile
   And by Fond Looks each others care beguile
   . . . . . .
   He [the Pimp]and the Lady both in Secret pine
   And Fret to see this MODISH COUPLE Join.

3. The marriage took place on 27.4.1736 but rumours about it were in circulation for a long time. This in itself would have been a sufficient excuse for Fielding to include the allusion to the Modish Couple seven weeks before Frederick and the Princess became a couple. But I have a feeling that this allusion was incorporated some time later, when public interest in the 'modish couple' was fully aroused by squibs and prints as well as by the 'monstrous' preparations for the marriage.

Pritchard and Walpole, Frederick also has received some strokes from the satirist.[1] These strokes are to be found in the description of Phaeton who, in certain respects, is identifiable with Frederick - such as in his ill-humour on not being considered a person of noble birth, in his complaint that he has been forced to live below his status, in the assurance that he is "the heir apparent of the Sun"[2] and, above all, in the entertainments ordered by Phoebus in honour of his son who has returned to him "after so long an absence".[3] Phaeton's temporary acquisition of the "chariot" probably refers to Frederick's hope to become the regent during his father's absence from the country.

Fielding's suspicions that Frederick's marraige would reconcile him and his party with the Court were certainly not shared by the 'Patriots', but they were not quite baseless. After all, his chief grievances against his parents were the delay in his marriage and the insufficiency of his allowances, and both of them were likely to be removed simultaneously. These suspicions, aroused probably by Prince's unconcealed delight on receiving his father's message, regarding his marriage, in February 1736 may have received some confirmation from the subsequent events - such as

1. Tumble-Down Dick was staged two days after Frederick's marriage, on 29.4.1736. On the night of the marriage, Handel's "Wedding Anthem" was sung at St. James's Palace.
2. For the scheme of King, Queen and Walpole to disinherit Frederick by circulating a story that he was a bastard, a changeling secretly adopted in 1707 to strengthen the chances of the Hanoverian Succession, see George Young, Poor Fred, pp.7-10.
3. Works., III, 431-34.

from the rapprochement between Frederick and Handel, from Frederick's withdrawal from the Opera of Nobility which was being patronized by him and other Opposition leaders, from the behaviour of his wife who prostrated herself before the King and the Queen when she first met them, from the phrase 'Concordia Cordium' written over the royal box at the Drury Lane Theatre when Frederick and his wife visited it on 5 May 1736[1] and from the grand party given by Walpole on 12 May 1736 in honour of the royal couple.[2] Fielding's fears were belied by the developments of the next three or four years (for which Frederick is not to be blamed) but what he had forecast in 1736 did occur in February 1742 when cordial relations between the King and the Prince brought, for the time being, the two parties together.[3]

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1. The Craftsman, 8.5.1736.
2. For this night Fielding advertised a special benefit performance of Pasquin for Miss Burgess - that is, Miss Stitch - who had 'zealously espoused the Country-Interest' but had eventually given it up for a paltry bribe.
3. See the following lines from Sir Charles Hanbury Williams' poem 'On the Princess [sic] Going to St. James's' -

   When to each other's fond embrace,
   The son and father came;
   Both parties lik'd the thing so much,
   That they too did the same.

   Strange miracle! sure future times
   Will scarce believe these stories;
   Lions may couple now with lambs,
   When Whigs embrace with Tories.

   But disappointment very soon
   Will lessen this affection;
   And tho' now party names are dead,
   They'll have a resurrection.

   And when the day of judgment comes,
   To loosen these embraces;
   Then some shall go and gnash their teeth,
   And some to happy places.

   These verses appear on pages 241-242 of the first volume of Sir Charles' Works. Horace Walpole's note on the event celebrated by Sir Charles is printed on p.241 and reads as

B. The Court and the Courtiers

Fielding's criticism of the courtiers is remarkable more for its frequency and pungency than for its novelty. In almost every single play there are some very severe reflections on them but these reflections are so conventional and commonplace that they cannot be considered as occasioned wholly by the courtiers of George II's time. They refer to those notorious aspects of a courtier's life and character which had been for ages the traditional butt of the satirists. Their hypocrisy, their mannerisms, their affectations, their superior airs, their immorality, their poverty are the things with which Fielding, like his contemporaries (such as Swift, Pope, Gay, Whitehead, Dodsley) and predecessors (such as the Restoration dramatists), makes fun of again and again. In one play he ridicules their contempt for the pure and healthier life of the 'rustics'[1], in another their contempt for the emerging merchant class of the country and their low trades.[2] On another occasion he reprimands them for their views on modesty and "blushing" - they consider them as a sure sign of ill-breeding[3]-and for their fondness for ridottos, assemblies, masquerades, Farinelli, rope-dancing and tumbling.[4] Their favourite pastimes are "raking, drinking and whoring"; their favourite "reputable ... trades", "gaming,

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follows:

> The reconciliation between the Royalties is finished, and £50,000 a year more added to the Heir apparent's revenue; he will have money now to tune up Glover, Thomson and Dodsley.

1. Love in Several Masques (Works, I, 158).
2. Pasquin (Works, III, 278); also in the Intriguing Chambermaid (Works, III, 46).
3. Love in Several Masques (Works, I, 145).
4. Pasquin (Works, III, 278).

intriguing, voting, and running in debt."[1] Their predilection for the last item is so great that the number of the "debtors at court" can be matched with the number of the "cuckolds in the city" (the cuckolds are of course indebted to the courtiers for this favour).[2] They are a part of the polite society but they are averse to polite literature since they have discovered that reading is "the worst thing in the world for the eyes"; it not only impairs their lustre but also renders them incapable of "direct ogle". However, the increasing tendency among the ladies of quality to talk about books while shuffling the cards obliges them to visit the booksellers "once a month" and get acquainted with the outsides of new publications.[3] They visit the playhouses, too, and pass their judgment on the plays without seeing them, for most of their time is spent either in "the Green-room talking to the actresses" or "in the boxes talking to the women of quality", or in admiring themselves in the "looking-glasses".[4]

Apart from their idle pursuits, the courtiers have achieved a certain amount of notoriety in two other respects - their living beyond their means and for their insincerity. They are supposed to "thrive ... by taxes"[5] (the courtier, "with his cringing bows"

1. Eurydice and Pasquin (Works, III, 383, 278).
2. The Universal Gallant (Works, III, 176).
3. Love in Several Masques (Works, I, 102).
4. Historical Register (Works, III, 352-3).
5. The Author's Farce (Works, I, 292).

gets more than "the stoutest sailor")[1] but they cannot feed their own footmen properly; nor are they known to have even "half a hogshead of wine". The reason for this is that all the public money that they acquire is spent "in houses, pictures, lace, embroidery, nick-nacks, Italian singers, and French tumblers".[2] Hence it is that once they get into the books of the dealers they stay there for ever. Hence also the fact that a "lace coat" has come to be regarded as a sure sign of poverty.[3] In other words, non-payment of debts has become a status symbol of the courtiers.[4] If they are liberal, it is only in offering empty thanks and praises and in making false promises. "I shall certainly do it", "I shall be glad to serve you", "depend upon it, I will remember you", "I will take care of you"[5] - are the phrases which every courtier has learnt by rote and repeats them before one and all without any intention of stirring himself on behalf of others. There is absolutely no sincerity, no honesty in them and yet they manage to satisfy the "poor believers".

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1. The Lottery (Works, II, 133).
2. Pasquin (Works, III, 285).
3. The Author's Farce (Works, I, 283); see also Charon's statement on page 32 of 1730 edition.
4. The Tragedy of Tragedies and Intriguing Chambermaid (Works, I, 477-78; III, 45.
5. Modern Husband and Pasquin (Works., II, 179-80; III, 281-83).

C. Parliamentary Elections

In addition to the electioneering methods of the Court and Country parties, their direct and indirect bribery, which have been noticed in earlier chapters, the other notable aspects of parliamentary elections that Fielding has taken into account are the following: the current controversy over longer and shorter parliaments, the question of the qualifications of the members, the election riots, the election petitions, the role of the members in parliament and the rationalized venality of the electorate.

The Opposition demand for the repeal of the Septennial Act of 1715 and re-introduction of shorter parliaments (triennial or annual) is mentioned in Don Quixote in England. Without making any attempt to go into the merits of the issue, Fielding pays attention to the most likely effect - that more frequent elections would make the supply of liquor run out.[1] The allusion to the proposal for the better qualifications of the members of parliament, which was rejected by the House in June 1732, occurs both in Don Quixote and Pasquin. Ridiculing the ministerial opposition to the bill, Fielding suggests, humorously, in one play that madness and even foreign nationality of a person are not a hindrance to his being elected to the parliament.[2] Equally sarcastic but much

1. Works., III, 108. For the debates against the Septennial Act, see the Craftsman for 28.2.1730 and 16.3.1734 and William Wyndham's speech in Coxe, Walpole, I, 411-17. (Wyndham, like other Tories, was in favour of triennial, or annual, parliaments). Walpole's criticism of Wyndham's speech appears on pages 423-25 of Coxe's book.

2. Works, III, 83.

more true is the suggestion made in the other play, where it is said that if a person "could not say 'aye' and 'no'" he would not be qualified for a candidate.[1] The fact that the contemporary elections were remarkable as much for the bloody encounters between the supporters of the rival parties as for bribery and boisterous gaiety is glanced at in the 1734 version of the Author's Farce where Charon is shown requisitioning "another boat" to ferry across the Styx "a waggon-load of ghosts arriv'd from England, that were knock'd on the head at a late election" (Charon also orders a search of their pockets as he had "found a bank-bill of fifty pounds t'other day in the pocket of a cobler's ghost" who had come "on the same account").[2] The same fact is presented more vividly in Pasquin in which the followers of Lord Place and Sir Harry fight a real "battle" on the stage.[3] Pasquin also contains Fielding's light-hearted description of the personal and civic considerations of a mayor who by turning a majority into a minority not only wins the gratitude of the courtiers but also occasions a controverted election as a result of which half the people of his town shall be able to visit London "at the candidates' expense".[4]

The part which a person elected to the parliament is supposed to play in its proceedings, Fielding has summed up in the phrase

1. Works, III, 268. On 'Ayes' and 'No's', see the Craftsman for 5.5.1733, Robin's Game; or, Sevens the Main" (1731); The Speech Englished, (stanza 1), the Champion for 24.5.1740 and The Vernoniad. For another reference to the qualification of the M P's, see The Author's Farce (Works, III, 327).
2. Works, I. 323.
3. Ibid., III, 283-84.
4. Ibid., III, 293-94.

I have quoted earlier - "Aye" and "No". His business is simply to cast his vote (voting, or turning a "parliament-man", is "the rarest trade" both for Punch and for Lord Place)[1] according to the directions of the people he has sold his affiliation to, and not to participate actively in its deliberations. The moment he enters the House he ceases to be the spokesman of the people and becomes a talking parrot trained to pronounce only two monosyllabic words. His service to his country is, therefore, hard to visualise; though his disservice to his family is not. What with the money spent on his election and on other resulting exigencies - such as meeting the bills of "milliners, mantua-makers, dancing-masters" who come to equip his lady for her visit to the metropolis[2] - he is driven to the very verge of bankruptcy.[3] Hence it is that the most sensible of them prefer not to attend the parliament at all (for a country gentleman, like Woodall of the Modern Husband, a parliamentary session becomes all the more tedious if it coincides with the hunting season); and if they are prevailed upon to do so, they come alone.[4]

Far more interesting than Fielding's observations on other features of parliamentary elections is his depiction of the mentality - or, to use a contemporary phrase, the 'humours' - of

1. Ibid., I, 327 and III, 278.
2. The Lottery (Works, II, 137).
3. The Universal Gallant (Works, III, 193).
4. The Modern Husband (Works, II, 178-79).

the electorate. He presents the voters, especially those who mattered, the mayors and the aldermen, not as simple-minded, ignorant sort of people who could be easily taken in by the politicians but as a set of astute bargainers fully aware of the value of their ware as well as of the fact that the election "times" came "but seldom".[1] "Good principles" of a candidate have no attraction for them (only a "fool" bothers about principles);[2] they would not choose one as their representative on that account.[3] Nor the natural interest of a "neighbour" carries any weight with them. The thing they are interested in is the prosperity of the borough which only the "circulation of money" can bring about.[4] But this circulation of money depends upon another factor, upon a contested election, for which reason they are anxious that nobody should get elected unopposed. If any candidate contrives to be so elected he forfeits their respect no matter how nice and good-natured he may have been to them. His action is tantamount to an insult to the corporation and to the constitution of the country. He cheats the people of that amount which otherwise he would have been obliged to spend on them and prevents a "free Briton" from exercising his sole privilege - the privilege to sell himself.[5] For these reasons, they, the voters, would "ride all over the Kingdom" to find a rival candidate.[6] How necessary it is for them

1. Don Quixote., III, 84.
2. Pasquin (Works, III, 268).
3. Love in Several Masques (Works, I, 103).
4. Don Quixote (Works, III, 87).
5. Ibid., (p.82).
6. Ibid., (p.83).

to have two contestants in the field is explained in Don Quixote, in the following statement of the Oxford-bred dialectician, Mr. Mayor:

> I like an opposition, because otherwise a man may be obliged to vote against his party; therefore, when we invite a gentleman to stand, we invite him to spend his money for the honour of his party; and, when both parties have spent as much as they are able, every honest man will vote according to his conscience.[1]

But the conscience of an "honest man" leans the same way as his interest does. Of the two candidates one who "bleeds" most, that is, "spends most would not have the least chance."[2] This point of vital importance both for the candidates and for the electorate is clarified in the second part of Mr. Mayor's speech:

> I never gave a vote contrary to my conscience. I have very earnestly recommended the country interest to all my brethren; but before that I recommended the town interest, that is, the interest of this corporation; and, first of all, I recommended to every particular man to take a particular care of himself. And it is with a certain way of reasoning, that he, that serves me best, will serve the town best; and he, that serves the town best, will serve the country best.[3]

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1. Works, III, 83.
2. Ibid., 87, 89.
3. Ibid., 83.

The policy of the mayor and the aldermen of Pasquin is the same as that of their counter-parts in Don Quixote. They remain non-committed towards the two parties in order to get maximum possible favours from them. After they have received these favours they vote according to their 'conscience'. The substantial bribery of Sir Harry proves more effective than the empty-handed bribery of the courtiers. But the interest of the voters demands that the winners should be declared losers so that by means of a controverted election the candidates could be put to further expense "in an honest way".[1]

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1. Ibid., 293-94.

CONCLUSION

Fielding's political plays, like his non-political plays, were pieces d'occasion. Strictly speaking they were not occasioned by the political controversies and political issues but they were too deeply involved with them. They contain allusions to almost every single topic with which the contemporary society was concerned, and, as such, they have certain amount of historical importance. But they are not historical documents giving a fair and detailed account of other developments of the period. Fielding's interest was in the men, not in the events; and more in the motives of the men than in their actions. He alluded to the events only because they helped him explain, or expose, the latent motives of the individuals. His approach to the contemporary politics was essentially that of a dramatist who, finding it reduced to farcical levels, picked up its chief characters and made them walk his stage for the diversion of his politically aware audience. His aim was to ridicule it rather than reform it. No doubt, like other great satirists, he considered 'ridicule' as the most effective weapon for combating political and social evils, and, in accordance with his favourite maxim - "we are much better and easier taught by the examples of what we are to shun, than by those which would instruct us what to pursue" - he did emphasize in his plays the despicably ridiculous elements of the body-politic with the zeal of a reformer. But it is doubtful if he seriously believed that his depiction of a hen-pecked monarch, of a corrupt and short-sighted minister, of blundering politicians, of unprincipled 'Patriots', of self-

bartering electors, and of the vote-purchasing, vote-selling Members of Parliament would have any salutary effect. Despite his claims to the contrary, he did not write his plays to instruct the King how to govern his wife and his ministers, or to make the ministers themselves aware of their shortcomings and ashamed of their conduct, or to instil public-spirit in the heart of the hypocritical champions of the liberties and properties of the people, or to make the public exercise its rights and privileges with prudence, but mainly to provide good fare to his audiences. He aspired to be a successful and popular dramatist first and a moralist and a reformer afterwards.

This provides an answer to the criticism that is often levelled against Fielding: that he attacked Walpole without attempting to understand and appreciate his policies. Fielding was not interested in understanding Walpole; it would have been fatal to him (as a dramatist) to make any such attempt. His aim was to exploit Walpole's unpopularity and not to criticise him rationally. But, although Fielding never had any high opinion about Walpole's capabilities, it would be wrong to attribute his uncharitable remarks on him to any prejudice against him. Later on he did fully identify himself with the people and shared their prejudices, but at the beginning of his career (as already stated) he simply catered to their prejudices, the prejudices which others had fostered. Herein lies the fundamental difference between Fielding and other critics of Walpole. He never aroused the passion of the people against Walpole. Nor did he attack Walpole so indiscriminately and so scurrilously as others did. Without

descending to the personalities, he criticised Walpole mostly on those grounds on which he deserved to be criticised and on which he was criticised (though not publicly) even by his admirers. If compared with the descriptions of the opposition writers like Whitehead, Glover, Thomson, Mallet and even Swift, Pope and Gay, Fielding's account of Walpole would appear nearer to the truth. And yet none of these writers said so many things about Walpole as Fielding did. Their observations are remarkable for monotony, Fielding's for variety and veracity.

There was yet another difference between Fielding and other opposition writers: he did not share their views that all that was corrupt and vicious in the society had its origin in Walpole and would disappear with his downfall. Corruption, in Fielding's opinion, was much too deep-rooted and politicians of all shades of opinion much too deeply involved in it. Towards the closing period of his dramatic career, he had become convinced of the necessity of Walpole's ejection from office, but he was not convinced that he would be succeeded by better men. He had his own misgivings in this respect. He suspected that the measures for which Walpole's removal had become imperative would remain; only the men, or "the sides", would be changed. It was because of these suspicions that he did not evince much enthusiasm for the 'Patriots'.

As a matter of fact there is no evidence whatsoever that Fielding at any stage of his dramatic career had developed a

partisan outlook in politics. There is nothing in his plays to suggest that he fell in with the 'Patriots' at the same time when he fell foul of Walpole. He made no attempt to glamorize them; nor did he ever care to paint an alluring picture of the services that the 'Patriots' claimed to be capable of rendering to the society and to the country. So far as the arguments favourable to them were concerned, if he did not burlesque them he ignored them. He was certainly not taken in by their pretensions and affectations. There were one or two persons in their ranks for whom he had great regard, but it did not make him less inclined to expose their weaker sides - just as the presence, in the Walpole camp, of one or two persons whom he revered did not prevent him from exposing the limitations of the minister and his party (those who maintain that Fielding sympathized with the Opposition because of his friendship with Lyttelton have found it convenient to forget that he had equally dear and close friends in the Court party, such as Bishop Hoadly, Lady Mary Montagu and Sir Charles Hanbury Williams). In matters of public conduct he neither found any distinction nor made any distinction between Whigs and Tories, Court and Country, 'Politicians' and 'Patriots', and, as his plays abundantly show, he "mauled" them "without fear and favour." As a satirist fighting universal corruption, he could not shut his eyes to the malpractices of one party; as a dramatist aiming at "universal satisfaction", he could not afford to tie himself to the band-waggon of one particular group. If his plays contain evidence of anything, it is of his success in

retaining the vantage point of a non-aligned observer of the political scene from which he picked at will a motley crowd of actors for the diversion of his public. If he picked Walpole more often, it was because he was the most prominent and the most diverting of the lot.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A.

The first 'Adventurer in Politicks' letter as published in the Daily Gazetteer of May 7, 1737.

To the DAILY GAZETTEER,

Sir,

AMONG the many Crimes laid to the Charge of the Ministry, that of undermining our Liberties, has been often hinted at, and many Steps pointed out as leading (imperceptibly indeed, till their deep Wisdom discover'd them) to that grand Ultimatum of the PROJECTOR'S Schemes.

NOT to enter into a detail of the Particulars, which have been so frequently stated on one Side, and confuted, or at least answered, on the other, I shall observe, that as there is no greater Mark of the Freedom of any Nation, than that Liberty which every Subject has of speaking his Mind freely, against any Measure, foreign or domestick, which he may think wrong, and this either in private Conversation, or in print; so those who abuse that LIBERTY of the Subject, give the greatest Shock that can possibly be given to LIBERTY ITSELF, by shewing how much the ABUSE of it, might make a RESTRAINT necessary.

IF we look at a neighbouring Nation, we may see dignified Informers, in almost every Publick Place, with blank Lettres de Cachet ready to fill up with the Names of such, as dare barely inquire, in a Manner different from the Sense of the Court, into the State of Affairs, and a Bastille always open to receive them. Go a little further, and cross either Ridge of Mountains: A Holy Inquisition, and the Gallies, offer their Service to the State,

as well as to Religion. God forbid we should ever see, in England, anything like this: But let not Gentlemen abuse the Lenity of Power, because they know it will not hurt them. 'Tis like talking Obscenity to a Woman, who will not defend herself and MUST hear it. But, were the Provocation still greater, as I hope and am confident the Ministry will never silence them by any Act of Power, their Behaviour becomes, by that very Moderation, so much the more unjustifiable, and ungenerous.

I do not mean these Observations against a Liberty of publickly reasoning on Affairs, or canvassing a Minister's Conduct, which would look like restraining the Liberty of the Press; but sure no Argument whatever, can be alledged to support the bringing of POLITICKS on the STAGE. When the Pulpit assumed a Right of preaching Politicks to the People, what a Confusion was the Nation thrown into! How high was Party carried! It was thought proper, from the ill Effects of such publick Declaimers, to Government in general, to banish it from the Pulpit: Once a Year, a Liberty is still reserved to them, of Party-preaching; and to that Liberty, in good Measure, may, perhaps, be ascribed the Continuance of a difference of Sentiments on a Transaction, which otherwise would only have been remembered as a Fact in History, and not partially felt by any.

THE ELECTION, (a Comedy in Pasquin) laid the Foundation for introducing POLITICKS on the Stage; but as the Author was general in his Satyr, and exposed with Wit and Humour, the Practices of Elections, without coming so near, as to point any Person out, he

was not then guilty of the Fault he has since committed; tho' I cannot think him Praiseworthy, for turning into Ridicule and making slight of one of the gravest Evils our Constitution is subject to: 'Twas as ill judged, as the late Mr. Gay's turning Highwaymen, Pickpockets, and Whores, into Heroes and Heroines, which (tho' done with all the Wit and Humour, conceiveable in Man) served only to increase the Number of those corrupt Wretches, who encouraged one another, from the Example of the Stage, which exposed with Wit, what ought to be punished with Rigour.

THE great Success which Pasquin had, encouraged the Author to give his Genius unlimited Scope, in this Vein; in which it has been made evident since, he was secretly buoy'd up, by some of the greatest Wits and finest Gentlemen of the Age, who letting their Passions get the Better of their more mature Reflections, have patronized a Method of Writing, themselves, were they in the Administration, would be the first to discountenance.

THE HISTORICAL REGISTER then, appeared to the Town, under the Patronage of the Great, the Sensible, and the Witty, in the Opposition, and contains a History of the Transactions of the Year 1736.

THIS witty Writer, in order to insinuate Ignorance in the Ministry, and want of Intelligence of the Affairs of other Nations, and to shew, that nothing has been produced in that Year, makes the Troubles in Corsica, the only known Transaction. Now tho' there is something most ridiculously pleasant, and apt to excite Laughter, in this Conception, yet to make it genuine Humour, no

Event of Consequence ought really to have been brought about in that Year; whereas, perhaps, Events, as great as any recorded in History, have come to a definitive CRISIS in it. We have seen a War terminated, and Three PRINCES established in DOMINIONS, the Discussion of whose Rights finally, by the Lex ultima Regum, had, perhaps, been attended with all the Fatalities that accompany the most obstinate and bloody War. The settling the Interests of a Twice King of Poland, a Duke of Lorain, and an Infant of Spain, are EPOCHAS, that hereafter may be thought very Considerable in History.

I have mentioned this, only to shew that the very Point, on which the greatest Stress of the Humour lies, is founded on a Falshood; and I would from hence infer, how much it is in the Power of such Exhibitions, to make a Minister appear ridiculous to a People; and if the Humour spreads, as possibly it may, and should take in Home Affairs, how much and how unjustly he might be exposed to publick Resentment, from such humourous and poetical Colouring of Things.

IT may be said here, in favour of the Author, that in the Close of his Register, he has treated the PATRIOTS no better than the POLITICIANS: But this, instead of extenuating only doubles his Crime, for, I think, to turn Patriotism, the noblest of Characters, into a Jest, equally blameable, and that neither should have any Place on the Stage. But perhaps these Patriots have consented to have themselves play'd, only to exhibit that IMPUDENT FELLOW, who can stand their HISSES, and laugh in his Sleeve at them.

THE Auri sacra fames, from which the Poet, no more than the private Man is exempt, had been so plentifully gratify'd by the Success of these two Pieces, that the Author (since he had gone so far with Impunity) was resolved to try his Vein further, and in EURYDICE hiss'd, very impudently compares Government to a Farce, and carries the Allegory throughout. (I shall not persue him in his particular Satyr, it not being to my immediate Purpose.) Now to insinuate to the Vulgar, who must ever be led, that all Government is but a Farce (perhaps a damned one too) is just as bad to Society, as it would be to tell the People, that their Religion is a Joke. There are Things which, from the Good they dispense, ought to be Sacred; such are Government and Religion. No Society can subsist without 'em: To turn either into Ridicule, is to unloose the fundamental Pillars of Society, and shake it from its Basis.

IF it be said here, that it is not comparing Government in general to a Farce, but only the present Managers, to Farce-Actors, I would then ask the high Patronizers of this new Method, what Good they propose to the State from encouraging such Licenciousness? Will the exposing the Ministry before the Eyes of the REPRESENTATIVES of all the Princes in EUROPE, give their Masters a higher Idea of the Court of England? Will it give Us a greater Weight Abroad? Is it then, the Part of a true Patriot, one actuated by the Love of his Country, to spread its Weakness thro' all the foreign Courts, by publickly favouring such ridiculous Representations of its Government? I talk upon their own

Principles, and suppose the absurd Charge on the Ministry true. No true Patriot would endeavour to render his Country contemptible: He would rather strive to hide its Weakness. He would try at a Cure, but by such Means as would not lay the Wound too open.

THE Stage has a large Field in the Follies, Vices, and Passions of Mankind. It has nothing to do with POLITICKS or RELIGION. The Press is open to detect any Imposition from either of these, without the Help of the Stage; and as it has such Liberty, it does not use it sparingly, but lays on Ministers most abundantly.

TO encourage then Politicks on the Stage, is not only unjust in itself, and improper, but of a most pernicious Tendency to the Stage itself, which instead of being a general Mirrour, where the Beauties and Deformities of human Nature are represented Impartially; whence we either copy or reject, as we find our Resemblance good or bad, becomes a private Looking-Glass, where Spleen, Resentment, and inconsiderate Levity, displays Objects without any Regard to Truth, Decency, Good Manners, or true Judgment. If such Attempts are suffered to go on, and Poets tolerated to pursue such unpoetick Licence, the very Gentlemen themselves, who now personally support it, tho' perhaps, in their own Minds they can't justify their Conduct in so doing, may themselves, in process of Time, be the Objects of such Exhibitions, and afford themselves as publick Spectacles of Derision on a Stage to the lowest of Mankind. And whom then can they blame? For the VERY POET that now prostitutes the Muses to their private Passions, may serve those of a future

Opposition to a future Ministry. ——— Nec Lex est justior ulla
Quan Necis Artifices, arte perire, sua. I am, SIR,
AN ADVENTURER IN POLITICKS.

APPENDIX B.

Fielding's 'Pasquin' letter as published in Common Sense of May 21, 1737.

To the Author of the GAZETTEER of May 7.

SIR,

THOUGH the Paper you have attacked me in be so little read, that should you print a Libel in it, you could scarce be said to have published it; yet, as you are pleased to style yourself an Adventurer in Politicks, and as I know a certain Person whom that Appellation will exactly fit, I shall take a little Notice of what you have advanced. This I undertake, not with Regard of what is written, but out of Respect to the Person whom I suppose the Author. And here, if I should happen to mistake you, I hope I shall not offend: For my Lord Shaftesbury well observes, that a judicious Beggar, when he addresseth himself to a Coach, always supposeth that there is a Lord in it; seeing, that should there be no Lord there, a private Gentleman will never be offended by the Title.

You set out, Sir, with a pretty Panegyrick on the Lenity of the Administration, whence you draw this Conclusion, That it is ungenerous to attack it, because it will not crush you for so doing. To abuse the Lenity of Power, when Men know it will not hurt them (say you) is like talking Obscenity to a Woman who will not defend herself, and MUST hear it. The Comparison between the Attack of a Ministry, and that of a Woman, might afford some pleasant Remarks; I shall only say, I suppose you do not mean an old Woman, seeing, that to talk a little smuttily to such, would be no great insult,

if the common Saying be true, which however I do not believe, that all old Women love B ——— y.

You are pleased to say, Sir, that no Argument whatever can be alledged to support the bringing of Politicks on the Stage. If you mean by Politicks, those Secrets of Government which, like the Mysteries of the Bona Dea, are improper to be beheld by vulgar Eyes, such as Secret Service, etc. I must answer, your Caution is unnecessary, at least to me, who cannot expose to others, what I have not found out myself. But if by your Politicks, you mean a general Corruption (one of the greatest Evils (you are pleased to own) our Constitution is subject to) I cannot think such Politicks too sacred to be exposed. But Pasquin was not (as you insinuate) the first Introducer of Things of this Kind; we have several Political Plays now extant: And had you ever read Aristophanes, you would know that the gravest Matters have been try'd this Way. A Method which a great Writer (I think Mr. Bayle) seems to approve; where he represents Ridicule as a kind of Fiery Trial, by which Truth is most certainly discovered from Imposture. Indeed, I believe, there are no Instances of bringing Politicks on the Stage "in those Neighbouring Nations" where, you say, that "we may see dignified informers in almost every Publick Place, with blank Lettres de Cachet, ready to fill up with the Names of such as dare barely inquire, in a manner different from the Sense of the Court, into the State of Affairs, and a Bastile always open to receive them:" Nor where you tell us, that "a Holy Inquisition, and the Gallies, offer their Service to the State, as well as to Religion."

But pray, Sir, what do you intend by mentioning these? I hope not to threaten us, nor to insinuate that any Thing will make it necessary to introduce such damned Engines of Tyranny among us.

But you seem to think, Sir, that to ridicule Vice, is to serve its Cause. And you mention the late ingenious Mr. Gay, who, you say, in his Beggars Opera hath made Heroes and Heroines of Highwaymen and Whores. Are then Impudence, Boldness, Robbery, and picking Pockets the Characteristicks of a Hero? Indeed, Sir, we do not always approve what we laugh at. So far from it; Mr. Hobbes will tell you that Laughter is a Sign of Contempt. And by raising such a Laugh as this against Vice, Horace assures us we give a sorer Wound, than it receives from all the Abhorrence which can be produced by the gravest and bitterest Satire. You will not hardly, I believe, persuade us, how much soever you may define it, that it is the Mark of a great Character to be laughed at by a whole Kingdom.

I shall not be industrious to deny, what you are so good to declare, that I am buoy'd up by the greatest Wits, and finest Gentlemen of the Age; and Patroniz'd by the Great, the Sensible, and the Witty in the Opposition. Of such Patrons I shall be always proud, and to such shall be always glad of the Honour of owning an Obligation. Nor is it a small Pleasure to me, that my Heart is conscious of none, to certain Persons who are in the Opposition, to those Characters by which you have been pleased to distinguish my Patrons.

The Historical Register, and Eurydice Hiss'd, being now publish'd, shall answer for themselves against what you are pleas'd

to say concerning them; but as you are pleased to assert, that I have insinuated that all Government is a Farce, and perhaps a damn'd one too, I shall quote the Lines on which you ground your Assertion; and, I hope, then you will be so good as to retract it.

——— Wolsey's Self, that mighty Minister,
In the full Height and Zenith of his Power,
Amid a Crowd of Sycophants and Slaves,
Was but (perhaps) the Author of a Farce,
Perhaps, a damn'd one too.

I am far from asserting that all Government is a Farce; but I affirm that, however the very Name of Power may frighten the Vulgar, it will never be honoured by the Philosopher, or the Man of Sense, unless accompany'd with Dignity. On the contrary, nothing can be more Burlesque than Greatness in mean Hands. Mr. Penkethman never was so ridiculous a Figure, as when he became *Penkethman the Great.

I shall only make a Remark or two, and conclude.

First, I have not ridiculed Patriotism, but have endeavoured to shew the several Obstructions to a proper exerting this Noble Principle; and that Corruption alone is equal to all the rest. I have endeavoured to represent the Consequence thereof, and to shew, that whoever gives up the Interest of his Country, in Fact gives up his own.

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* In the Burlesque of Alexander.

Secondly, I must observe, Sir, that if we are not (as you say) to expose evil or weak Measures, for fear of informing our Neighbours, this Argument will extend in its full Force to the Press; and I think I remember to have seen it formerly used on that Occasion. But it will not hold in either Case; for I do not believe Foreign Ministers to be so weak, as to remain in an entire stupid Ignorance of what we are doing; nor do I think, if well considered, a more ridiculous Image can enter into the Mind of Man, than that of all the Ambassadors of Europe assembling at the Hay-Market Playhouse to learn the Character of our Ministry.

Lastly, you insinuate, that the same Poet, who (you say) now prostitutes the Muses (that is, by laughing at Vice and Folly) may hereafter attack future Administrations (tho', by the by, I am far from owning that he hath attacked the present.) To this, Sir, I must beg Leave to say, without any Reflection on our present Ministry, that, I believe, there are now amongst those Gentlemen who are styled the Opposition, Men in Genius, Learning, and Knowledge so infinitely superior to the rest of their Countrymen, and of Integrity so eminent, that should they, in process of Time, be in the Possession of Power, they will be able to triumph over, and trample upon all the Ridicule which any Wit or Humour could level at them: For Ridicule, like Ward's Pill, passes innocently through a sound Constitution; but when it meets with a Complication of foul Distempers in a gross corrupt Carcase, it is apt to give a terrible Shock, to work the poor Patient most immoderately; in the Course of which Working, it is ten to one but he bes——ts his Breeches. I am, SIR, Your humble (tho' not obliged) Servant,

PASQUIN.

APPENDIX C.

The second 'Adventurer in Politicks' letter as published in the Daily Gazetteer of June 4, 1737.

To PASQUIN, in Common Sense, of May the 21st.

Sir, June 1, 1737.

IT is of little Importance, either to the Publick, or to the Point between us, whether you are right, or no, in your Conjecture about me; for which Reason, without giving you any more Light than you already seem to have as to my Person, I shall consider the Answer your Respect (as you are pleased to say) for me, has made you favour me with, tho' I must disagree with you, in your Quotation of my Lord Shaftesbury's Observation: For, I believe, no Private Gentleman that has Common Sense, is pleased with the Beggar's Compliment. He may smile indeed at the little Art the Fellow uses to get a small Alms, and at the Hopes of Success from his Flattery, with which he hugs himself: But I am, particularly, surprized you should be of that Noble Lord's Opinion, who in the Historical Register, have represented the Parts of the English Lords to be of such little Consequence, that no Private Gentleman would care to exchange.

THERE is something peculiarly absurd (excuse the Freedom of the Phrase) in your quoting Aristophanes in your own Justification; whose licentious Abuse of the State, put the Athenians upon the very Thing our Legislature is now passing into a Law. Every Body that has the least Acquaintance with Literature, knows what the Vetus Comadia was; and that the Licentiousness of it took in not

only Private Life, and as near as was possible, the very exact Figure of Persons; but exposed on the Scene, the Principal Men of the Republick by Name. Aristophanes carry'd this so far, that in a Piece of his, in which he brought the Person of Cleon on the Stage, who was a leading Man in Athens, the Actor refusing to play the Roll, HE himself went on and performed it. He afterwards brought Lampsacus and Brasidas, nay, Alcibiades and Pericles on the Scene, and treated their Ministerial Characters, as well as their Private ones, with the same Licentiousness. Such was the Intemperance of this, your Model, Sir, that the very best, as well as the wisest, Man of all Greece, no less than Socrates, was exposed by him, and thro' his Sides, Morality and Government radically struck at. This Abuse of Comedy at length stirr'd up the Indignation of the Athenians, who thought the Minister as well as the Private Man accountable to them for his Actions, and not to the Poet; and finding, as Horace tells us, the Grievance fit to be restrained by Law, they did restrain it by Law. I shall beg Leave to quote the Passage, not for your Information, for you cannot be ignorant of it; but to shew you, that tho' a wise Government may wink at small Abuses, it never can, when they arrive to a certain Pitch.

> Successit vetus, his, Comedia, non sine multa
> Laude; sed in. VITIUM LIBERTAS excidit, & VIM DIGNAM LEGE
> REGI. LEX EST ACCEPTA, CHORUSQUE
> TURPITER OBTICUIT, SUBLATO JURE NOCENDI [HOR. AR. POET.]

I BELIEVE, and am confident, the Government had no Thought

of vesting any Power in any Great Officers Hands for this Purpose, had not you pav'd the Way for the Subversion of the Stage, by introducing on it Matters quite foreign to its true Object; and by making yourself a Tool to the indiscreet Mirth of some Great Men, put Others upon keeping the Stage within its proper Bounds; which is all that is now aim'd at, or really done.

I DO not think, that to ridicule Vice is to serve its Cause, as you are pleased to make me think. But I say that to represent Vice in Colours more amiable than its natural ones, is to serve its Cause. And I dare say, there is not one single Person that ever went to the Beggars Opera, but who thought of the Characters there represented, with much less Horror and Aversion, than the same Person would, and actually does, of the Wretches that go to Tyburn, or the Plantations, tho' there is no Difference but the Poet's Colouring between them. Is this then ridiculing Vice, to make it less shocking? Surely, the greatest Advocate for Mr. Gay will not pretend to clear him of this Imputation. Is this ridiculing Vice, to shew Corruption, as you have done in Pasquin? This is a familiarizing Corruption, just as Mr. Gay familiarized Vice, by taking away all the ODIUM of it.

I SHALL not pretend to make you believe, that it is the Mark of a great Character to be laugh'd at by a whole Kingdom. But I rather think 'tis your Vanity that makes you believe the Case was so; for by the Moral with which you sum up your Election, at which the whole Kingdom laugh'd, as you say, you plainly tell us, that

Better Herring is in neither Barrel.

SO that yoor Great Men and Patrons may have the same Pretence to the same Greatness of Character, by having been equally laugh'd at, in Pasquin, the Historical Register, and Eurydice hiss'd; as, if necessary, might be shewn by Quotations from the two last.

EVERY body, Sir, is a Judge of his Heart, and conscious of his own Obligations, tho' perhaps some Persons may think an Obligation WIPED OFF, by being DISCLAIM'D, after the full Value of it received. Now, tho' I should be very sorry to hurt you with your Patrons, I must, in strict Justice, shew them, how far they may trust your Professions of Obligations to them, either made, or to be made; and this from your own Words.

IN your Dedication to the Publick, prefix'd to the Historical Register, you have this very remarkable Expression, that asking Leave to dedicate, is asking whether you will pay for your Dedication, and in that Sense you believe it is understood by the Authors and Patrons.

IF it is understood in that Sense, all that is said in a Dedication must be (to use a vulgar Expression) nothing but mere Shop-Language; and if a Nobleman consents to a Dedication, he must consent to be flatter'd; and if he consents to be flatter'd, he must, according to your own Rule laid down in these Words, be a very IMPUDENT, or a very SIMPLE Fellow, or BOTH.

IF I am not very much mistaken, Sir, you have frequently ask'd Leave to dedicate, upon your own Principle OF BEING PAID FOR IT, and have received the Price of several Dedications. In return

for which Kindness, you now publickly tell your Noble Benefactors, that they are very impudent and simple Fellows, to have given you Money to have flatter'd them; which heaps this further Folly on your Head, that if you should at any Time (as you have before) enter a Caveat against being thought a Flatterer, your own Words will condemn you: And with this, I leave your Patrons to trust your Professions of Regard and Respect for them.

YOU seem particularly pleased at the Appellation of the Great, the Sensible, and the Witty, with which I characterize your Patrons; but you make a very ungrateful Return for this Concession, by supposing an Opposition of Characters. But of what Advantage to you is all this? Does it reflect any Lustre on you? Alas! my Friend! Don't you see you are nothing but the Cat's Paw! No Office surely to be proud of! An Engine, supported by them, to bespatter with! Were you chosen by them for any other Reason, but because your licentious Satire pleas'd their Spleen, I would allow the Choice, marking you out as an Object of Merit. But to be singled out for a Squirt to throw Filth about ——— How ill does this suit Horace's Idea of a Poet,

Ingenium cui sit; Cui Mens divinior atq; os
Magna sonaturum - - - - Des nominis hujus honorem.

I will not cavil with you about Words; you may not perhaps have expressly said, All Government is but a Farce; but you should have carry'd your Quotation a Word further, and you would have found - - -

——— 'Tis ALL A CHEAT;
Some Men play little Farces, and some Great.

But the Drift of the Allegory throughout, is too plain to be mistaken; and you may, if you please, deny what every Body else is convinced of.

YOUR Ideas are, for the most Part, Ludicrous, and I cannot help smiling with you, at your Conception of the Ambassadors in Europe assembling all at the Haymarket House, to learn the Character of the Ministry. ——— But the Misfortune is, you had rather say a witty Thing at any time, than a true one; for you should have said, To see the Ministry exposed.

As to the very handsome Compliment paid, in your last Paragraph, to the Gentlemen in the Opposition, I will only say, that let their Constitution be ever so sound, I dare answer for them, they will never suffer Ward's Pill, even to be administer'd to them, nor publickly set up to Sale, by any Poetical-Anti-Ministerial-Quack whatever, in their Days.

I am, SIR, Your unknown and humble Servant,

AN ADVENTURER IN POLITICKS.

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